

# THE OLD TESTAMENT

A STUDY

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HERBERT C. ALLEMAN



**FROM  
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL  
OF  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

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## A STUDY

*By*

HERBERT C. ALLEMAN

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PREPARED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF  
THE PARISH AND CHURCH SCHOOL BOARD  
OF  
THE UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

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**To J. S. A.**





## INTRODUCTION

THE importance of leadership education in the church is universally acknowledged. The rapid developments in general education, the influence exerted by these developments upon Christian education, and the production of new types of courses for church schools and church societies are making greater demands upon church workers. These cannot be fully met without at least a measure of preparation on the part of all who are responsible for carrying on the various activities of the local congregation and its auxiliary organizations. This need of more adequate leadership preparation has been felt not only by the leaders of the church at large but also by the local church workers themselves. There is evident everywhere an earnest desire for a program of leadership education which will help present and prospective congregational leaders to equip themselves for more effective service.

The United Lutheran Church in America, through its Parish and Church School Board, has for many years been aware of this need of its constituency and has planned a series of texts to help meet the requirements of the present educational situation in the church. This series of texts is known as *The Lutheran Leadership Course*.

The Board has recognized the fact that some church workers have had more educational advantages and fuller leadership experiences than others. Accordingly it has planned courses on two levels—a more elementary series and a somewhat advanced series. The present volume is a text in the more advanced series.

This text is intended to provide the basic material for a course on the Old Testament. It is primarily a content course and only incidentally touches upon the question of the use of the Bible in teaching and in life. These aspects of Biblical study will be considered in other units of *The Lutheran Leadership Course*. Instructors should, however, feel free to add interpretations and make applications of the materials here presented. The class sessions should be something more than lecture periods in which the content of these chapters is merely re-stated and something more than mere question-and-answer periods in which students are asked merely to review the material in the text. Instructors'

methods will naturally vary, but student participation in research and in class discussions is highly desirable. This course may be offered as a one-unit course or as a two-unit course. When given as a one-unit course, Part I (Chapters I-XII) should be used. When given as a two-unit course, Part II (Chapters XIII-XXIV) must also be treated. For credit requirements, *The Lutheran Leadership Course Bulletin* should be consulted.

Students taking this course on the Old Testament should not only study the text itself, but should do as much Bible reading as possible. The references under "Bible Readings" at the beginning of each chapter should be considered a minimum requirement. The "Topics for Further Study" are merely suggestive; other topics may be substituted or added at the discretion of the instructor. The "Bibliography" is intended primarily for instructors, though the books listed will prove helpful also to students who desire to investigate the subject under consideration more thoroughly. The "Questions" found at the end of the narrative are placed there largely to help the student focus his attention upon the main points in the chapter; they will serve, therefore, as a means for review. Occasionally a thought question has been added, the answer to which must come from the student's own thinking.

The author of the present text, the Rev. Herbert C. Alleman, D.D., has been chosen to prepare it because of his specialized knowledge in the field of the Old Testament and because of his more than twenty years of experience in teaching. He is professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Literature and Theology in the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pa., and has also taught extensively in leadership training groups. He has prepared a text of real merit. It should prove valuable not only to persons taking formal courses, but also to others who desire a better understanding of the background, content, message, and mission of the Old Testament.

Due acknowledgment is hereby made to the International Council of Religious Education for their kind permission to quote from the American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible, copyright, 1929.



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## **PART I**

### **Israel: According to Her Scriptures**





## CHAPTER I

# THE BACKGROUND OF THE BIBLE: THE MAKING OF THE BOOK

1. *The Gift of Language.* Not the least of God's gifts to man is language. It reflects all that the senses apprehend or the mind conceives. Nothing is too large or too small, too high or too low, to find expression in words. With language we can picture to others the simplest object in nature, and with language we can express our highest thought of God. It is a great boon that we can paint our ideas in sounds as we can paint our perceptions in colors. Language is not only our medium of communication with one another but also our means of calling on God. In language also we photograph our experiences and preserve our knowledge. Without language there would be no history of human life.

2. *The Invention of Writing.* Second only in interest to speech-sounds are speech-signs. Writing is one of the wonders of human achievement. It conveys a picture to the eye as speech conveys a picture to the ear. At how early a date the art of writing began to be practiced it is impossible to determine. Men doubtless knew how to communicate their thoughts by word of mouth before they devised ways of recording them; but from the records of the past we judge that the latter did not lag far behind the former. The beginnings go back to man's primitive abodes. Objects were symbolized on the walls of cave-dwellings. We might call primitive writing "portraiture." Of this sort are the cave-drawings of the early Bushmen of Africa and of the rock-shelters of France. In the course of time the picture was conventionalized and became an ideogram, the sign of an act or a thing. Then came the phonogram, the symbol of a sound—either a whole word or a syllable. Finally, taxing the genius of the three most gifted races of the ancient world, alphabetic writing was invented.

3. *The Materials of Writing.* In the Library of Congress at Washington one of the most striking contributions of the artists who decorated its walls is a series of lunettes by John W. Alexander on "The Evolution of the Book." The first picture is

"The Cairn," a heap of boulders erected by primitive man as a memorial, probably the earliest attempt to communicate through visible signs. The second is "Oral Tradition," the tale of the Eastern story-teller. The third is "The Hieroglyphic," as inscribed on the monuments of Egypt. The fourth is "The Pictograph," the American Indian's picture-writing on skins. The fifth is "The Manuscript," as illuminated by the monks of the Middle Ages. The sixth is "The Printing Press," invented by Gutenberg in 1452. The series is a reminder of the slow process by which we have come to have the great boon of the printed book.

Stones were used for record before image-writing was invented. Besides cairns, pillars, and the like, we have the carved surfaces of exposed slabs. The famous tri-lingual inscription which gave Sir Henry Rawlinson the key to the Assyrian language was on a cliff in Persia. Two of the most famous of stone inscriptions are on the Rosetta stone, which gave the key to the Egyptian language, and on the Moabite stone, which refers to King Omri of Israel.

The first portable writing was on clay tablets in Mesopotamia. Made of the soft clay which abounds in that valley, small oblongs, resembling shredded wheat biscuits, were written on with a wedge-shaped (cuneiform) stylus. Some of this work is so finely done as to require a magnifying glass to read it. Great poems were written on clay tablets of this sort; in the British Museum one may see the original of the Gilgamesh epic. Business accounts also were kept on them; in the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania one may see hundreds of such accounts of the firm of Murashu and Sons, Nippur. By 1500 B. C. the clay tablet was in use from Crete to the far East, and all over Palestine. From Tell el-Amarna, in Egypt, have been recovered several hundred tablets of correspondence between cities in Palestine and the East and the reigning Pharaoh.

One of the most common materials, on account of the ease with which it can be engraved, is lead, which was used for both diplomatic records and literary work. Other soft metals also have been used. The famous treaty of the Hittite king Khattusil was sent to Egypt engraved on silver. The bark of trees made good writing material; both *liber* in Latin and "book" in English are thought to refer to the bark of the lime or beech tree. Tab-



lets of wood were very common. The shoulder blades of oxen and other bones of animals served the same purpose. Ivory was a favorite material for tablets in classical times.

The next marked advance in writing was made in Egypt. "It is difficult for us . . . to realize the immensity of the debt we owe to the active mind which conceived the idea that the thin pellicles of the papyrus plant, written upon with a brush made of a bruised reed, would provide a means of recording facts and thoughts, less durable, indeed, than the record incised with infinite pains upon hard stone or clay, yet lasting enough for all ordinary purposes, and infinitely easier and more practical for all common uses of life."<sup>1</sup> The inner bark of the papyrus reed, called "byblos" (from which we get our word "Bible"), was cut into strips, laid transversely, subjected to heat and pressure, and became the "papyrus" of the Egyptians—a word from which we get our English word "paper." For ordinary use, it was made in sheets, like our note paper; but for writings of greater importance or sacredness, sheet could be added to sheet, until a roll of needed length was produced. The Harris Papyrus No. 1, in the British Museum, is 133 feet in length by 16½ inches in height. Papyrus became very popular wherever writing was done, especially in Greece and Rome. All the original classic manuscripts of the writers of these countries were written on papyrus. Many ancient manuscripts of papyrus have been recovered.

The next material used for writing was the skins of animals. A ban had been put on the exportation of papyrus from Egypt. The Greek-speaking world, the largest user of papyrus, was thrown upon its own resources. What should be done for writing material? The answer came from the city of Pergamus in Asia Minor. The Pergamenes invented a process of cleaning the skins of sheep without tanning, producing a smooth, beautiful writing material called "pergamene," which in time became "parchment." It was also known as "vellum." This material could be written upon on both sides, and, being tough and durable, by scraping could be used again and again. Such a second writing was called a "palimpsest." Many of our valuable manuscripts are palimpsests. Parchment came into general use in the

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<sup>1</sup> J. Baikie, *Egyptian Papyri and Papyrus Hunting*, 1926, p. 13.

second century before Christ, and by the third century after Christ it had supplanted papyrus. The material was usually mounted on two rollers, which then bore the name "roll" (*volumen*, in Latin, from which we get the word "volume"). It was on this material that the Jews wrote their Old Testament manuscripts, and on this more durable material the papyrus New Testament manuscripts were copied. The only manuscripts of the New Testament we possess were written on vellum.

The Chinese gave the world paper, which they claim to have made from silk waste before the Christian era. The Chinese statesman Tsai Lun was the inventor of paper made of vegetable fiber. The first manufacture of rag paper in Europe was in Spain under the Moors in A. D. 1154, but soon afterwards it was made in Italy, France, and Germany. In the fourteenth century it came into universal use.

4. *The Evolution of the Book.* It was in the third century after Christ, when vellum had come into general use, that the book was invented. The Bible is largely responsible for this, for it required so many rolls to make a complete copy of the Scriptures that the change was made to the "codex" (manuscript book), a name first used by the Romans for law books. Lines were ruled on the vellum, and there were usually two columns of writing to a page. The writing was done by hand by scribes, and in time the process became a fine art. Later, monks were the copyists of the Scriptures and developed great proficiency in their work. The book headings were made in pictures; capital letters were enlarged in artistic designs, often in color; and frequently illustrations were placed in the margins and at the bottom of the page. The finest collection of these old illuminated books is to be found in the British Museum. The Library of Congress now possesses a very interesting collection. The work of these ancient copyists remains the acme of book making, the despair of the modern printer.

Printing by means of wooden blocks is said to have originated with the Chinese. It was unknown in Europe until the Middle Ages. Modern printing began with the carving of whole pages on blocks of wood. Most of the books thus made had to do with the Bible, the most famous being *Biblia Pauperum*, a book of Bible scenes, of the twelfth century. Printing from movable type was the gift of Germany, and there is a tradition that it orig-



inated with Johann Gutenberg of Mainz. The story is that when he was a boy he cut the letters of his name out of the bark of a tree, and, having been left alone in the house soon afterwards, he amused himself by spreading them on a board so as to form his name. A pot of hot purple dye was near by, and by an awkward turn he happened to knock one of the letters into it. Without stopping to think he snatched it out of the liquid and as quickly let it drop again, this time on a white dressed skin. To his amazement he beheld a beautiful purple "H" on the white surface of the skin. Whether or not the story is true, it is probable. By 1456 Gutenberg's press was busy, and the first completed book that issued from it was a Latin Bible. It contained 641 leaves of two columns to the page, and the initial chapter and divisional letters were illuminated by hand. About one hundred copies were printed, one-third of them on vellum. Three of the latter have survived; one of them—a very fine specimen—is now the property of the Congressional Library in Washington. A page of a parchment copy is in the Zimmerman Library of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pa.

From Mainz the art of printing spread all over Europe. In 1470 William Caxton set up his printing press in England, and by the end of the century, eighteen countries were printing books, most of these being Bibles. That does not mean that there was a general circulation of the Bible; the editions were small (usually under two hundred copies) and the price was prohibitive. The circulation of the Bible became a specific objective only in the seventeenth century, the earliest organization for that purpose being the Canstein Bible Institute, founded at Halle, in Saxony, by Karl Hildebrand, Baron von Canstein. Bibles and New Testaments in Luther's version were printed in large numbers. The Canstein Institute issued some 6,000,000 copies of the Scriptures. In England the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge among the Poor was organized in 1750 and did much to disseminate a knowledge of the Bible. In 1804 the British and Foreign Bible Society was founded, and within fourteen years seventeen such organizations were flourishing in Europe. America's earliest Bible Society was organized in Philadelphia in 1808. Five societies were organized in 1809, and others followed rapidly. In 1816 the representatives of thirty-five societies met in New York City and organized the American

Bible Society. During its 117 years it has issued 246,046,560 volumes of Scripture. Of these nearly 30,000,000 were whole Bibles. It has been estimated that over 882,000,000 volumes of Scripture have been printed and circulated since the invention of printing.

### Questions

1. What were the main stages in the history of writing?
2. What materials have been used for written records?
3. What is papyrus? parchment? vellum? a palimpsest? a volume?
4. State a few outstanding facts concerning the circulation of the Scriptures.
5. In what ways can you use the information contained in this chapter in your work in the church? Give one or two concrete illustrations.

### Topics for Further Study

#### *Writing and Writing Materials in the Old Testament*

With the help of a good Bible dictionary and a concordance, make a study of the various kinds of writing materials referred to in the Old Testament. Compare your findings with the information contained in this chapter.

#### *The Monasteries and the Bible*

What contribution did the monasteries make in preserving and distributing the Bible? Consult encyclopedias and F. G. Kenyon's *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*.

#### *The Art of Printing and the Bible*

Consult encyclopedias and A. E. Newton's *The Greatest Book in the World*.

### Bibliography

Note: Under this heading there appear in each chapter a few titles of books which have been used in the preparation of the chapter. Students desiring to pursue further their study of the subject under consideration will find these books of value.

Booth, H. K. *The Background of the Bible*, 1928.

Davenport, C. J. H. *The Book, Its History and Development*, 1908.

Kenyon, F. G. *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, 1895.

Milligan, G. *Here and There among the Papyri*.

Smyth, J. P. *How We Got Our Bible*, 1899.

*The Encyclopedia Britannica*, "Books," "Bible," "Bible Societies."



## CHAPTER II

# THE BEGINNINGS OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

(Genesis)

### Bible Readings\*—

*Genesis 1: 1-31*—The Beginning of the Universe

*Genesis 2: 1-25*—The Beginning of Man's Career on Earth

*Genesis 3: 1-24*—The Beginning of Human Sin

*Genesis 12: 1-9*—The Beginning of the Chosen People

The Hebrews were a people of a great religious experience—a unique experience of God. It was that experience which prompted them to write their Scriptures, our Old Testament. At the very outset of Bible study, then, it must be remembered that the Bible is a book which grew out of life. While in relation to human history as a whole it covers a relatively brief span of time and is limited to a narrow stage of geography, it has had wide contacts. Great civilizations lie back of its history. The world was old and civilization well advanced when the Bible was written. The idea that in the Bible we have a comprehensive history of the world is no longer held. In the Bible we have merely a compendium of man's development *from a religious point of view*. The Bible writers were only incidentally interested in any other phase of man's development.

The beginning of Hebrew Scriptures goes back to the time of Moses—to the tablet records which he undoubtedly made. Though much of the tradition of the Hebrews was no doubt carried in memory, recited in camp, and taught to the children in the tent, it was natural that matters of outstanding importance—the covenant laws of Sinai and the common laws of their bedouin life—should take more permanent form. When, then, the Hebrews finally settled in Canaan, they brought with them both an oral tradition and a number of records; but the writing of their sacred books had not yet begun. It was not until the

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\* Note: Bible references for special reading are listed at the head of chapters for the convenience of instructors and students. They are indicated again in the body of the text in bold type and should be read in connection with the narrative rather than at the beginning.

Israelites were established in the land and had their native kings that they were moved to write the account of their experience as a people. Even then their aim was not to write a history as we speak of history, but to tell what their religion meant to them and how it gave them their place in what we call the kingdom of God. When they came to use this material—their tradition and their records—they found that it carried them back to so early a time that it seemed natural for them to begin with the beginning of the world. The first book which we have in our Old Testament they called “In the Beginning”; we call it by the Greek name *Genesis*. Its material falls naturally into two divisions:

(1) *Genesis 1: 1-11: 26*—Primeval Beginnings;

(2) *Genesis 11: 27-50: 26*—Beginnings of the Hebrew People.

1. *Primeval Beginnings.* *Genesis* has its stories of the beginning of the world, life, and man. There are many creation stories in the world; every people which has produced a civilization has handed down a creation story, and some of them, like those which came from Babylonia, are very similar to the Biblical stories. But the differences are greater than the resemblances. Only the *Genesis* account has said, “In the beginning God created”; only there do we find a unity which can explain the unity of the world. The others begin with the emergence of the gods from chaos, and end with their glorification; *Genesis* begins with the priority of God and ends with the divine destiny of man.

This the writer sets forth in two ways. First, he deals with the creation of the world as a universe. (Read *Genesis 1: 1-31*.) He sees creation unfolding in an orderly way, as our science likes to think of it. Out of chaos, step by step, comes the world, a small part of a great whole, of which man is the crown. He thinks of the universe very much as we think of our solar system. The vast firmament above is ruled by the sun and moon, whose relation to the earth is vital. The earth emerges from a watery chaos. It swarms with living things in rising stages until man appears as its capstone and climax—all that science has been able to tell. One thing, however, the writer tells us which neither modern science nor ancient Babylonian mythology has told, and this is that man is made in the image of God and is endowed with a moral nature, which means that



he is responsible for his deeds and his choices. In the old Babylonian story, the Gilgamesh epic, this spiritual and moral quality is wanting: there man's resemblance to deity is in power, not, as in *Genesis*, in moral character.

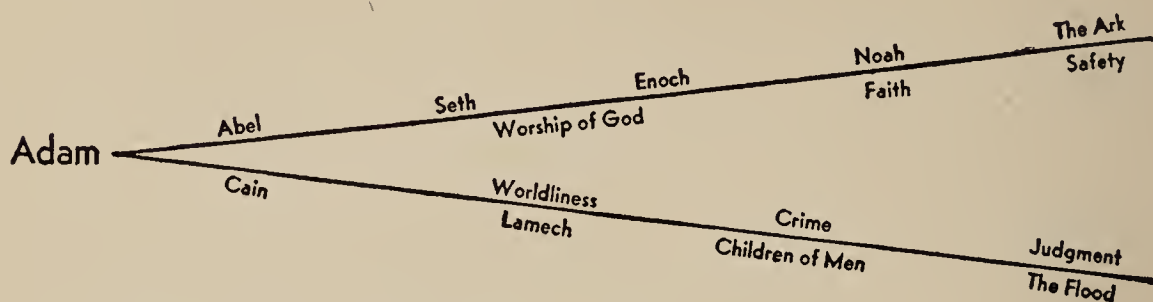
Then, in the second chapter, he pictures creation not as a great work of God but as the beginning of man's career on the earth. (Read *Genesis* 2: 1-25.) His science is of secondary importance. What interests and fascinates him is not scientific ideas of the world but man's place in the world. He begins, not with the universe, but with man. He is not interested in the sun and moon and stars, but in man as the keeper of the earth and the master of all other creatures. But he does not stop there. The first story (*Gen.* 1) ends with the creation of man; it pictures creation as it came from the hand of God, of every part of which he could say, "It is good." It does not raise the question whether the world kept the order which God set upon it. But in the second story (*Gen.* 2, 3) the chief interest is in what has happened since. Did man move forward and upward, or did he very soon disclose that there was another element in him which might and did work havoc with the divine order in the midst of which he was set? Looking about him, the writer saw everywhere the evidence of sorrow and suffering. What had brought them into the world? Other peoples besides Israel saw these things. They saw that there had been a great flood in the world; they saw wars and confusion of tongues—what did it all mean? In the Babylonian stories the flood is a capricious act of a god; in *Genesis* the flood is a moral act of God, a punishment of sin. So, too, in the nearest approach to a story of the Fall found among the Babylonians—the "Adapa Myth"—there is no moral element, as there is in the Biblical account. (Read *Genesis* 3: 1-24.) It is this spiritual, this moral note which runs through the *Genesis* stories which differentiates them from the stories of other religions.

*Genesis* tells not only the story of man's fall but also the processes which were set in operation for his salvation. Two lines of human life are traced; one follows the way of Cain, the other the way of Abel. (See diagram on page 20.)

After the flood, the world was repopulated through the family of Noah. The covenant with Noah (*Gen.* 9: 9-11) was a covenant, not with an individual, but with the world. The rainbow was



taken as a symbol of the sure order of the world for the reconstruction of life on the earth by man's toil. Israel's religion



AFTER PELOUBET.

enabled it to see in the rainbow a significance which it did not have for other peoples.

From Noah's sons the great divisions of men and nations descended. These are described geographically, Japheth being the traditional father of the northern tribe of nations; Ham, of the southern; and Shem, of the central and eastern. The writer's interest was not comprehensive race study; he was merely locating the elect family, Israel, in the whole family of nations. In ten generations he makes the connection between Shem and Abraham (*Gen. 11: 10-26*). Of this line came the Hebrews.

2. *Beginnings of the Hebrew People.* With Abraham a new epoch began. (**Read Genesis 12: 1-9.**) Hebrew tradition preserved the story of a great migration from the East into Canaan and its varying fortunes there, terminating in a further migration to Egypt. *Genesis 12-50* is the record of it. Later, when the Israelites were settled in Canaan and were enjoying its fruits and grain, they were commanded to take some of the first fruits, put them into a basket, carry them to the sanctuary, and there, in the presence of the priest who officiated, to say: "This day I make confession unto my God that I have come to the land which Jehovah my God swear to my fathers to give us. . . . A wandering Aramean was my father" (*Deut. 26: 3-5*). That is a picture of the patriarchal age of this people. It suggests a group of tents and a camel train. They could not forget that their fathers had been wanderers, seeking a city which was never to be found by them, but which was reserved for their children.

The story of the chosen people begins with Abraham, the first pilgrim of faith. After his entrance into Canaan, we meet him

first at Shechem, the central shrine of the land. Then, successively, at the other sacred places of the Canaanites he worshiped the God whose call he was following. This is the significance of the story of Abraham: he was taking over the land, as it were prophetically, for the people that were to come from his loins. At Shechem he received the assurance that he and his children were to inherit the land (*Gen. 12: 7*). Then famine in the land drove him to Egypt, where he prospered, and on his return he settled at the sacred shrine of the south, while his nephew Lot chose the rich cities of the plain. Here Lot was carried off by the four kings of the East (*Gen. 14*), but Abraham rescued him.<sup>(1)</sup>

So great became the fame of Abraham that Melchizedek, king of Salem, honored him. Abraham separated himself from the Canaanites and became the patriarch of the south country. Here Ishmael was born to him by Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian slave, and, at long last, Isaac, by Sarah herself in her old age.

All this tells how the new people were beginning to multiply in the land. They were sorely tried by the influences of their new environment. The supreme test of Abraham's loyalty came when he conceived it to be the command of his God that he offer Isaac as a sacrifice. The practice of human sacrifice was common in that ancient world. Excavations at Gezer show that the sacrifice of children was a Canaanite rite. The sacrifice, however, was not required. In the end he and Sarah were laid to rest in the cave of Machpelah, where also Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah were to be buried (*Gen. 25: 9; 49: 30; 50: 13*). Much history of the fortunes of the nomad Hebrews is crowded into these simple stories.

No great events center in Isaac. He is, however, the link connecting Abraham with the tribes of Israel which, centuries later, settled in the south of Canaan.

Isaac's son, Jacob, had a checkered career. Though he secured the birthright from his brother Esau, the father of the Edomites, his ill-gotten primacy proved no blessing. He was driven out

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<sup>1</sup> We have here one of the few clues to chronology from external sources. Amraphel has been identified by many scholars as the great Hammurabi, the sixth king of the first dynasty of united Babylon, whose date has been located, from contemporary records, as early as 2100 B. C. or a little later. That would make the Exodus about 1580 B. C., one of the dates strongly urged by some scholars. It is impossible to be dogmatic about Bible dates. The chronology of the Bible is not a matter of divine revelation.



of the land before the face of Esau and became a sojourner at Padan-aram, whence his ancestors had come; but when he returned, he was strongly reinforced with wives, children, and property, and was able to meet Esau and hold his own. Jacob's discipline had made him strong. He too passed from Shechem to the south to remove his household from the lure of the Canaanites. From him the twelve tribes of Israel are reckoned to have descended (*Gen. 35: 23-26*).

The line of religious interest now follows the life of Joseph, through whom the children of Israel came into Egypt. The story of Joseph is one of the most beautiful ever written. A favorite son, from childhood dreaming of a great future, and the envy of his less richly endowed brothers, he was sold by them to a caravan of traders and carried to Egypt, where he was again sold, this time as a slave. He was cast into prison because of the false accusation of his master's wife. There he interpreted the dreams of his fellow prisoners and, later, of the great Pharaoh himself. In the famine which he foretold, he, with his inheritance of mastery in the face of hardships, became the food-administrator of the land. The picture is very vivid here. For seven years he went up and down the land, urging the farmers to plant more grain and to make sure of two crops a year. When the harvest was gathered, he took a fifth for the royal treasury. Great storehouses sprang up and were filled. Then came the famine, and all eyes turned to Egypt. Joseph's brethren came down from Canaan, and he not only gave them food, but the Pharaoh whom he served settled them in the land of Goshen, where they prospered.

3. *Spiritual Truths Exemplified in the Patriarchs.* The stories of the patriarchs are rich in religious suggestion. The patriarchs are the spiritual fathers of the Hebrews. Abraham has been called "the first pilgrim of faith." When called to go to a land which he was afterwards to inherit, "by faith he obeyed, not knowing whither he went." We do not know what Abraham thought of God or how he knew that this command came from God. He was not singular in having a conviction of duty. What made Abraham the spiritual father of the Hebrews was that, when the new call came to him, he obeyed. Our writer was not interested to tell us what the call was or how it came; he was interested in telling us that while thousands of men in Ur were

content to go on with the old life, Abraham was not. He had heard God's call; there was but one thing for him to do. God asked for obedience; the fundamental thing in Hebrew religion was response to the divine call. Abraham was a pioneer in doing one's duty when it is made clear. Hence he was called the "father of the faithful," the "friend of God" (*Isa. 41: 8*), and to this day the highway from Jerusalem to Hebron is called "The Highway of the Friend." "He believed in Jehovah, and he reckoned it unto him for righteousness" (*Gen. 15: 6*).

Isaac exemplifies the domestic virtues of filial obedience and conjugal fidelity. He was a man of the home. As Abraham's outlook was the world, Isaac's was the family. Loyalty was the watchword of his life. He was loyal to his father, even to impending death. He was loyal to his wife, giving Rebekah a perfect love. Of all the patriarchs he alone stood aloof from polygamy, and his name is enshrined in the prayer of the marriage service of the Church of England as a model husband.

Jacob was "the supplanter," as his name signifies; but he had a capacity for higher things. He is the type of all that is worst and of all that is best in his race. A line of guile ran all through his early life, but he became a "perseverer with God" and got a new name, Israel. The struggle at Peniel made him a new man (*Gen. 32: 24-30*). He is the pioneer of all who enter into their inheritance through spiritual change of heart.

Joseph is the forerunner of all those who turn defeat into victory and prevail by rising above their circumstances. In a great temptation he said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God" (*Gen. 39: 9*). God was his refuge and strength. His communion with God made him a prime minister, though his career began in a prison cell. Joseph's life was a vindication of providence. "And as for you," he said to his brothers, "ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (*Gen. 50: 20*).

### Questions

1. What were the first beginnings of Hebrew literature?
2. What is the significance of *Genesis*? What beginnings do we find in it?
3. How do the creation, fall, and flood stories of *Genesis* differ from those of other peoples?

4. What is the significance of the story of Abraham? of Isaac? of Jacob? of Joseph?
5. What spiritual qualities are illustrated by these patriarchs?
6. When teaching these stories, what elements in them would you select for special emphasis—the historical facts, the scientific ideas, or the spiritual and moral values?

### Topics for Further Study

#### *The Book of Genesis*

Study the entire book and make a careful outline of its content.

#### *The Spiritual Qualifications of the Hebrew People*

Read the entire book and note all the spiritual qualities possessed by its leading characters. Consult J. P. Peters' *Religion of the Hebrews*.

#### *The Teaching Values in Genesis*

Read the entire book and make a list of important truths which you believe to be of special value when teaching lessons taken from *Genesis*. Note after each truth the most important references in which that truth is brought out.

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## CHAPTER III

# THE EXODUS, THE COVENANT, AND THE WANDERINGS

(*Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*)

### Bible Readings—

*Exodus* 1: 1-22—The Condition of the Hebrews in Egypt

*Exodus* 3: 1-17—The Calling of Moses

*Exodus* 12: 1-51—The Exodus

*Exodus* 20: 1-17—The Ten Commandments

*Exodus* 24: 3-8—The Covenant

Joseph's brethren had come to Egypt. Here the Pharaoh settled them in the rich land of Goshen, in the delta of the Nile, where they had such pasture for their cattle and such food for themselves as they had never known. In the balmy air of Egypt, with good food and no hardships, they multiplied in numbers and in possessions. Jacob and Joseph and his brethren all passed away, but the Hebrews became more and more numerous. Generations passed. We know that at about this time a series of Asiatic Semites, the Hyksos, ruled over Egypt for approximately a century. It is probable that it was under their favorable rule that the Hebrews prospered. About 1580 B. C. the Hyksos were driven out by Ahmose I, and it may be that this change of dynasties brought about the change in the fortunes of the Hebrews. At any rate, there came a Pharaoh "who knew not Joseph."<sup>(1)</sup> Whenever it was, the Hebrews preserved the tradi-

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<sup>1</sup> Many scholars believe that the Pharaoh of the oppression was Ramses II, of the dynasty following that of Ahmose I. Ramses is known from Egyptian monuments to have erected extensive works, such as are mentioned in *Exodus* 1: 11. In this case, Merneptah, a son of Ramses II, would be the Pharaoh of the Exodus. This would place this important event at about 1213 B. C. This date, however, does not allow for the 480 years between the Exodus and the building of the Temple (*I Kgs.* 6: 1), and, on the other hand, leaves too much time between the period of Abraham and the Exodus. H. R. Hall (cf. *The People and the Book*, p. 3) makes a strong argument for a date about the time of the expulsion of the Hyksos, according to which Ahmose I was the Pharaoh of the oppression, and his famous daughter Hatshepsut the protector of Moses. Others hold to the age of the Tell el-Amarna letters (1450-1370 B. C.). By this theory Thothmes III was the oppressor, and the Exodus took place in the reign of his successor, Amenhotep II. There is a famous picture at Abd-el-Kurnah, opposite Luxor, which represents Asiatic captives making bricks under taskmasters. A part of the inscription is: "The taskmaster says, 'The stick is in my hand, be not idle.'" It is dated in the reign of Thothmes III. These facts are cited to show how impossible it is to be dogmatic as to the date of the Exodus.

tion of oppression which made the name of Egypt forever afterwards the symbol of crushing cruelty. The services of Joseph were forgotten; only the fact that the Hebrews were more prolific than the Egyptians was noted. (Read Exodus 1: 1-22.)

1. *Moses the Man.* Different traditions, not necessarily contradictory, tell of the different methods used by the Egyptians to keep the Hebrews in subjection: forced labor and the destruction of their male children at birth. Every boy baby was to be cast into the Nile. It happened that in one of the little mud huts in the wide, flat plain of Goshen, a baby of such beauty was born that his parents sought to save him by hiding him among the flags at the river's brink. Did they know that the flags were sacred to the Egyptian river god? Did they know that the Pharaoh's daughter was wont to go to bathe at that spot? Did they share the Egyptian's veneration of the royal household as divine? At all events, their child was saved; and though he was given an Egyptian name and an Egyptian training—Stephen, in his famous speech (Acts 7: 22) says he "was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians"—he never forgot that he was a Hebrew. When he was grown, he "went out unto his brethren, and looked upon their burdens" (Ex. 2: 11). Some of them were in the brick fields fashioning clay into bricks without straw; others were in the canal-basin, where thousands of lives were sacrificed in the attempt to connect the Nile with the Red Sea. Moses then, for the first time, learned what Egypt was. Her goodness to him made her cruelty to his people all the more unbearable. He could no longer accept her favors. "By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt" (Heb. 11: 24-26).

Moses' first effort in behalf of his people—a blow of retaliation (Ex. 2: 12)—resulted in his banishment, and he sought refuge in the land of Midian. There he was to learn that the thing he was willing to lay down his life to accomplish was to be secured through faith. Up to his experience at the burning bush Moses was powerless; even the God of his people seemed powerless before the mighty Egyptians. But at the burning bush Moses learned that his God had power as well as will; that he was a



consuming fire to those who opposed him; that he had a mission for his people; and that this mission, which he then put into Moses' mind, he would enable him to carry out. (Read Exodus 3: 1-17.)

2. *Moses the Leader.* Moses went into the land of Midian, an exile; he returned, a prophet. We should like to know more about his experience in Midian—what he saw in the burning bush and how he knew it was God speaking to him. There is a providence in our not being told; else we might feel that unless we have an experience like Abraham's or Moses', God is not speaking to us. God comes differently to different men. The point is that Moses believed what God revealed to him, and acted on it. Moses gathered together the demoralized clans of his people and awoke in them the purpose to be free. It was God's providence that delivered Israel. The celebration of the Passover to this day perpetuates the testimony to it.

Moses' prophetic work is seen in two facts: first, he brought his people a new name for God, and, secondly, he led them by means of it out of the bondage of Egypt. "Say, I AM hath sent me unto you." We call the name of the God of Moses "Jehovah"; but the Hebrews said "Adonai," which means "Lord," for they would never utter the sacred name.<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew word is probably to be pronounced "Yahweh," which means "He will do what he will do." "This is my name forever," God said to Moses, "and I will bring you out of the affliction of Egypt." Giving his name was like giving a banner to the children of Israel. A name meant much more to the Hebrews than it does to us. With us it is little more than a label. To the Hebrews this name—which they may have lost in the centuries of hardship in Egypt—brought the assurance that their deliverance was at hand. By the strength of that name the Pharaoh's power to hold them was broken. That was the significance of the ten plagues. Under the name of Jehovah the Hebrew people rallied in a host which the Pharaoh could not stay. (Read Exodus 12: 1-51.) They were able to cross the Red Sea: "Jehovah caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided" (Ex. 14: 21). By the same providence the Pharaoh's army was

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<sup>2</sup> The name "Jehovah" was coined by Galatinus, the confessor of Leo X, in 1520, using the vowels of "Adonai" with the consonants of the sacred name.

destroyed, as Moses' and Miriam's songs of victory celebrate (*Ex. 15: 1-21*). By the same providence the Hebrews were provided with food (*Ex. 16*) and brought to Sinai, where Moses had first learned to know Jehovah.

3. *Moses the Lawgiver*. Moses had learned in Midian what he had never learned in Egypt—namely, that the strength of a nation is its God. At Sinai he bound his people to this God in a sacred Covenant. (**Read Exodus 24: 3-8.**) As Jehovah had delivered them, they were to be his people. Their obligation was summed up in the Ten Words, which we call the Ten Commandments, originally probably in short form for easy remembrance, looked upon as rights rather than as ethical principles. "It is regard for rights which occupies the foreground. All the commandments may be subsumed under the prohibition 'Thou shalt not do violence to' (1) what belongs to God: His sole right to worship, His superiority to any earthly form, His name, His day (as the type of all His other 'holy ordinances'), His regents on earth; (2) what belongs to thy neighbor: his life (as his most precious possession), his goods, his chattels, his honor."<sup>3</sup> (**Read Exodus 20: 1-17.**) At Sinai Moses became known as the lawgiver of Israel. The laws which have been attributed to him have been classified under four heads: (1) the Ten Commandments (*Ex. 20: 2-17, Deut. 5: 6-21*); (2) the Book of the Covenant (*Ex. 20: 18—23: 33*); (3) the Levitical (or Priestly) Code (*Lev.*); (4) the Deuteronomic Code (*Deut. 12-26*).

4. *The Wanderings*. Forty years were to elapse between the establishment of the Covenant and the entrance into Canaan. The people of Israel were organized into a nation at Sinai. Here a census was taken and leaders were appointed (*Num. 1-3*). In the second year they moved towards the Promised Land. This journey led through the wilderness, by a route we cannot now trace, until they came to Kadesh-barnea (Kadesh means "sanctuary"), another name for which is En-Mishpat, or "Fountain of Judgment." It was an oasis in the midst of the desert and here the desert tribes were wont to settle their differences as well as to water their flocks. Kadesh-barnea became a rendezvous for Israel. Here Israel learned the common law of the desert, and the training of the people in the religion of

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<sup>3</sup> *Hastings' Bible Dictionary*, Ext. Vol., p. 634.





Jehovah advanced. From Kadesh-barnea as a base the Promised Land was surveyed by spies, and an unsuccessful attempt was made to enter it from that point. The faintheartedness of the people caused their inheritance of the land to be delayed a generation. Only the two faithful spies lived to enter it.

The annals of the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses) do not give us a clear account of the remaining thirty-seven years. According to *Deuteronomy* 1:46 the children of Israel abode in



Kadesh many days. From this point the return march was by the stages given in *Numbers* 33. All attempts to identify these sites have been equally unsatisfactory. In the first month of the fortieth year the children of Israel were again at Kadesh-barnea. It is this encampment which is referred to in *Numbers* 20:1. As the king of Edom refused to let them pass through his territory, Israel had to turn back a second time from the border of Canaan and go around the mountains of Edom in order to enter the land from the east (*Num.* 20:14-21). Though they were plague-smitten in the desert, the new generation was much improved and advanced steadily around Edom and Moab. They were able to defeat the Amorite kings—Sihon, whose domain was between the Arnon and the Jabbok rivers, and Og, king of Bashan, which was north of the Jabbok. This double victory brought them to the borders of Moab, whose king sought to conjure away his peril. Balaam, a famous soothsayer, was brought from his northern home to put a curse upon the Israelites, but his prophetic eyes could see only their future greatness. Yet, although Moab could not repulse Israel, the lures of its Baal worship were fatal, and we read that “twenty and four thousand” filled graves of lust. The worship of the nature religions around them was ever the Hebrews’ greatest peril.

There remained only the Midianites to be brushed aside, and the door was opened to the Promised Land. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh settled east of the Jordan. Israel was at last ready to cross over into the land of promise. Their great leader, however, had perished. Moses’ death remains one of the obscure events of the last days of the wilderness wandering. “His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated” (*Deut.* 34:7), but he was not permitted to enter the land to whose borders he had led his people.

5. *The Religious Significance of the Exodus and the Covenant.* The exodus from Egypt is one of the outstanding events in Hebrew history. In many respects it is the key to the Old Testament (cf. *Judg.* 19:30; *I Sam.* 8:8; *II Sam.* 7:6; *Amos* 9:7; *Hos.* 12:9; 13:4; *Jer.* 2:2, 3). The Hebrews had the memory of a great deliverance which had made them a nation. Their Passover was to them what Independence Day is to Americans. They had been oppressed in the “iron furnace” of affliction. Of themselves there was no way out. But their God had raised up a

leader. "Here we must presuppose that Moses and the principal facts of the tradition, the flight from Egypt and the marvelous deliverance of the people . . . all belong to strict history. But we have good grounds for doing so. For what occurred there, both in outward event and in inward experience of soul, is from beginning to end quite inexplicable as the creation of the imagination of the people. . . . Were Moses not a historical figure, another would have to be invented."<sup>(4)</sup> Henceforth the significance of the Exodus to the people of Israel was that they were a redeemed people. They knew that of themselves they could not have extricated themselves from bondage, and that by themselves they could not have survived. It was their God who had delivered them, and he delivered them for a great mission in the world. They were not their own; they were his. Henceforth they were to be the bearers of his religion among the nations.

The corollary of the deliverance of the Exodus was the obligation of the Covenant. "From the beginning of their history Israel had a motive that was not to be found in the nations around them, whose religion grew up as it were out of the soil. It was not Israel that first chose Yahweh, but Yahweh that chose Israel. Their mutual relation does not rest upon blood relationship but upon the free determination of a mighty God. This determination, however, was no arbitrary one; it sprang from the fundamental attributes of this God—namely, righteousness and mercy. He saw the misery of the people when they pined under cruel and yet wholly undeserved oppression, and was filled with compassion for them; he determined to deliver them, and with a strong hand he carried his purpose to a victorious issue. Righteousness and mercy are essentially moral qualities. . . . It was self-evident that the God who in his very choice and deliverance of Israel had exhibited moral attributes, would require from the people the same qualities on which his relation to them was based."<sup>(5)</sup> That is the significance of the Covenant.

The covenant idea was not new at Sinai—from of old the tribes of the peninsula had bound themselves in covenants—but the content of the covenant of Sinai was new. Here, because Jehovah had done the righteous thing of delivering the oppressed slaves,

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<sup>4</sup> R. Kittel, *The Religion of the People of Israel*, Eng. tr., 1925, p. 51.

<sup>5</sup> Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, Ext. Vol., p. 632.



the obligation on their part was not sacrifice, as in the nations around them, but a righteous life. All the prophets acknowledged that the ethical impulse in Israel came from Moses' day. "The moral precepts of the Decalogue are of that simple, elementary type without the practice of which no human society, large or small, can continue."<sup>6</sup> Those precepts were then given the sanction of religion; they were made the type of offering which was henceforth to be acceptable to the God of Israel. This explains also the significance of the long sojourn of the Hebrews at Kadesh—a period which has always been obscure. The people needed to work out in practice the principles which had been revealed to them at Sinai, before they were ready to settle down in the midst of another idolatrous and self-seeking people similar to the Egyptians whom they had left behind. They needed to know the nature and character of their God. They needed to know what his will was in practical ways and how they were to serve him. He asked or commanded certain things because these were what he cared for. Through the Decalogue his people learned that he did not care for images and sacrifices, but that he cared a great deal about how they treated one another. In the wilderness Israel was to learn how to worship a God who cared most for righteousness, and how they were to practice righteousness in the daily contacts of life. If they were tempted to turn back to Egypt, they were to be reminded that it was Jehovah and not Egypt who had been their nursing father. If they were tempted to serve other gods, they were to remember that the God who thought them worthy to be the exponents of his righteousness in the world was a jealous God. If they had differences among themselves, they were to learn to settle those differences by the principles of righteousness. They were to learn to live as children of God. Living thus in their nomad days, they were to learn how to live in the land to which their God was bringing them.

### Questions

1. Describe the life of the children of Israel in Egypt.
2. How and through whom were they delivered from Egypt?
3. In what respects was Moses' work a prophetic work?

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<sup>6</sup>J. M. P. Smith, *The Moral Life of the Hebrews*, 1923, p. 62.

4. What is the religious significance of the Exodus?
5. What outstanding events took place at Sinai? Why were they of great significance to the Israelites?
6. What is the religious significance of the Covenant?
7. What can you tell about the years in the wilderness?
8. If you were asked to prepare five lessons on this period of Hebrew history, what five incidents would you select and what facts or truths would you emphasize in connection with each incident?
9. What leadership qualities do you find in Moses? What value have these qualities in the life of church leaders today?

### Topics for Further Study

#### *The Sources of the Mosaic Period*

With the help of Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias, find out all you can about the four Biblical books from which most of our information about the Mosaic period is derived.

#### *The Israelites' Bedouin Life*

Consult Alfred Bertholet's *History of Hebrew Civilization*, E. W. Rice's *Orientalisms in Bible Lands*, or any other books on the subject which may be available.

#### *The Covenant Idea*

Find out all you can about the covenant idea. Consult good Bible dictionaries. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* has an illuminating article.

#### *The Permanent Values of the Ten Commandments*

What place do the Ten Commandments have in the teaching of Jesus? in the New Testament? in the teaching of the Christian Church? in modern life?

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## CHAPTER IV

# THE SETTLEMENT IN CANAAN AND THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTINUANCE

(*Joshua, Judges, Ruth*)

### Bible Readings—

*Joshua* 3: 1—4: 24—The Entrance into the Promised Land

*Judges* 4: 1-24—The Story of Deborah

*Judges* 7: 1-25—Gideon's Defeat of the Midianites

*Judges* 16: 4-31—The Downfall of Samson

*Ruth*—The Story of Ruth

The books from *Genesis* to *II Kings* present a continuous narrative from the creation to the Babylonian captivity. Each book in the series takes up the thread of the story where the preceding book drops it. Of this total series, six books—*Joshua*, *Judges*, *I Samuel*, *II Samuel*, *I Kings*, *II Kings*—are called the "Former Prophets." The term "prophets" is used because the writers deal with the history not merely as history, but as history illustrating the religious experience of Israel. Of these Former Prophets, then, *Joshua* is the first. Its main divisions are:

(1) *Joshua* 1-12—The Conquest of the Land;

(2) *Joshua* 13-22—The Division of the Land.

1. *Joshua and the Settlement of the Land.* Moses' mantle fell on Joshua, the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim. Since he has suffered in comparison with his great predecessor, Moses, it is difficult to get a clear and adequate impression of his character. We do know, however, that he had been with Moses from the Covenant days at Sinai and that he shared Moses' spirit. He was, therefore, the logical successor of the great leader to whose guidance Israel owed its entrance into Canaan.

The incidents of the first part of the book bearing his name are very thrilling. (Read *Joshua* 3: 1—4: 24.) In rapid succession we follow the movements of Joshua—the crossing of the Jordan, the memorial at Gilgal, the capture of Jericho, the several attacks on Ai, the battles with the Canaanites, the conquests in the south and in the north. The military campaigns of Joshua, chronicled in *Joshua* 1-12, are confirmed by the most recent





researches of archæology.<sup>(1)</sup> The winning of the key positions of Ai and Hazor gave the land into the hands of the Hebrews. It is not surprising that they believed that their God was with them and that he was showing himself to be the God of history.

Both *Joshua* and *Judges* tell us that the conquest of the land was effected gradually and with difficulty. It was carried out by clans and by combinations of clans acting at different places. Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh secured a foothold east of the Jordan and clung to it (*Deut.* 3: 12-17). Judah and Simeon, with help from Caleb, took the south (*Judg.* 1: 1-15). Ephraim swept westward toward the Mediterranean Sea and founded a sanctuary near Shechem (*Deut.* 27: 1-8). The success of the tribes was unequal, as we learn from *Judges* 1 (a summary of the whole movement). The strong tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim won secure places for themselves, but the weaker tribes had to be content to settle down with the Canaanites as best they could. The tribe of Dan evidently could not hold out in its first location and migrated northward, to the head waters of the Jordan (*Judg.* 18). The allotments of Issachar in the plain of Esdraelon, of Zebulun northwest of it, and of Asher and Naphtali north and northeast represent ideal boundaries—territory allotted them, but never completely made their own. (Study the map on page 35.)

But Israel failed to get control of many of the great strongholds of the land. The Canaanites were not driven out. There were still Canaanites in Shechem years later, in the days of Gideon. In many places the newcomers were compelled to live with the older inhabitants, whom they sometimes reduced to servitude (*Judg.* 1: 28). These Canaanites who remained in the land became a twofold problem: economically, they had to be cared for, and, religiously, they remained as "thorns" in the side of Israel to prove them (*Judg.* 2: 3). Each people influenced the other. The Canaanites, with their superior civilization, enjoyed a great advantage. From them Israel had to learn agriculture and architecture. Would they also accept the Canaanite religion? That was the acid test for Israel. Had Israel gone over to the Baal worship of the Canaanites, the lessons of the past would have been lost on them. That they did not go over was due to a series of leaders raised up by their God.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Garstang, *The Foundations of Bible History*, 1931.



2. *The Struggle for Continuance.* The leaders who were raised up for the Israelites in the crises of their settlement were called "judges." The name no longer conveys the meaning of the Hebrew word, which signifies a defender against an enemy, or a saviour (*Judg.* 3: 9, 15, R. V.) The book bearing the name *Judges* is in three parts:

- (1) *Judges* 1: 1—3: 6—Review and Religious Significance of the Movement;
- (2) *Judges* 3: 7—16: 31—The Narratives of the Deliverances;
- (3) *Judges* 17: 1—21: 25—Contemporary Incidents.

To appreciate the book it must be remembered that the period was one of confusion and demoralization. There was no central authority, no organized government; "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (*Judg.* 17: 6 and three other times). When invasion came, the Hebrews were as helpless as the American colonists before the Revolutionary War. The secular historian says these invasions occurred when Egyptian fortunes waned and Egypt, whose rulers often wielded great influence in Palestine, was not able to patrol the land. Then marauders would steal in or native peoples would assert their power.<sup>(2)</sup> The writer of *Judges* says these invasions were due to the Israelites' disloyalty to Jehovah and to their disobedience (*Judg.* 2: 11-15). "Nevertheless Jehovah raised up judges which delivered them out of the hand of those who oppressed them." Six of the exploits are given in detail, arising out of six invasions.

*Invasion from the Northeast.* The first chastisement of the children of Israel came from "Aram-of-the-two-rivers," whose king, Chushanrishathaim ("Chushan, the double-dyed villain"), probably a vassal of the Hittites then dominant in the northeast, oppressed Israel until Othniel, Caleb's younger brother, was raised up as judge (*Judg.* 3: 7-11).

*Invasion from the Southeast.* While Othniel lived, the land had rest; but after his death, the Moabites invaded it. Ehud, a Benjamite, was the judge who delivered the Israelites, and the land had rest for eighty years (*Judg.* 3: 12-30).

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<sup>2</sup> J. Garstang has shown, with great plausibility, that the Israelites' periods of rest from foes correspond in duration to the reigns of the strong Pharaohs of the XVIII and XIX Egyptian dynasties who reasserted Egyptian claims in Palestine after the indifference of Amenophis IV. It is the first historical explanation advanced to account for the fact that Israel sometimes had periods of peace while at other times it suffered from almost incessant warfare.

*Invasion from the North.* The strong Canaanites in the north, under Jabin their king and Sisera his general, meanwhile were pressing hard on Israel, until Deborah rallied the Hebrew tribes, and Barak, her ally, in a memorable battle in the plain of Esdraelon, put the Canaanites to flight. Again the land had rest for a generation. (**Read Judges 4: 1-24.**)

*Invasion from the East.* For seven successive years the Midianites, a strong desert tribe, swept over the land like grasshoppers. At last a youth by the name of Gideon defied them, and, by a daring stratagem, utterly routed them. (**Read Judges 7: 1-25.**) Gideon is one of the great characters of the Old Testament. He began by overthrowing the altar of Baal in his father's clan. His victory over the Midianites lived in the memory of the Hebrews like Thermopyle in Greek history, or Bunker Hill or Yorktown in American history. The "day of Midian" was one of the great days in the history of the Hebrews. The people would have made Gideon their king, but he refused to exalt himself since it was Jehovah who had given him the victory. Gideon's son Abimelech was not so true to the traditions of Israel and, after the bloody extermination of his brothers, took the title of king, only to perish by violence (*Judg.* 6: 1—9: 57).

*Invasion from the East.* After nearly a half century of peace the Ammonites, an East Jordan people, took advantage of Israel's situation and crossed the river, oppressing Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. Relief came through Jephthah, a Gileadite, who was victorious over the Ammonites in a notable battle near Aroer. Jephthah judged Israel six years (*Judg.* 11: 1—12: 7).

*Invasion from the Southwest.* The severest afflictions which Israel suffered at the hands of any of its oppressors came from the warlike Philistines, who had settled in the coast plain after having been driven back from Egypt. Jehovah delivered the children of Israel into their hands for forty years. At last deliverance came by the hand of Samson, a hero from the little tribe of Dan, who from his birth was consecrated as a Nazarite unto Jehovah. Samson's exploits form the most colorful pages of the Old Testament (*Judg.* 13-16). The downfall of Samson forms one of the most striking character lessons in the Bible. (**Read Judges 16: 4-31.**) He could slay a lion, toy with men,



and carry off the gates of a city, but he could not rule his own passions.

Besides these, six other judges are mentioned.<sup>(3)</sup> Eli, Samuel, and Abimelech also performed the functions of judge and are sometimes placed in the list of judges, thus making a total number of fifteen.

The book closes with two detached incidents: the story of Micah and his image worship, in connection with the migration of Dan; and the outrage of the Gibeathites and their extermination (*Judg.* 17-21).

3. The book *Ruth* is placed after *Judges* because it deals with this same general period. The Hebrews include it in the third great division of their Bible, "the Writings." The chief purpose of the book seems to be the tracing of the genealogy of David to the Moabite maiden, Ruth. (**Read Ruth.**)

4. *The Religious Significance of the Period of Settlement and Struggle.* We learned in the last chapter that even in the wilderness the worst foes Israel had to contend with were not hostile tribes and the armies of hostile kings, but the allurements of the nature religions, such as they found at Peor (*Num.* 25:3). So deeply did the idea of local gods lodge itself in their minds that it became hard for them not to recognize the god of the place in which they found themselves. In settling in the land of Canaan a new and trying temptation came with their new experience. Up to that time the Israelites had been nomads; they had wandered with their flocks, and their flocks had furnished them their sustenance. But the land into which they entered was the seat of an old civilization. Barley, wheat, wine, and oil were abundant. If the Israelites were to live in the narrow quarters they had conquered, they must learn agriculture. But the god of agriculture—that is, the god of the Canaanites, whose fields were smiling with plenteous harvests—was Baal. When they asked their Canaanite neighbors the secret of their harvests, they were told that these were the blessing of Baal. Accordingly, they concluded, Baal must be acknowledged.

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<sup>3</sup> These are: Shamgar (a non-Hebrew name), who performed a daring feat against the Philistines in their first entrance into the land (*Judg.* 3:31; 5:6); Tola, a man of Issachar, who judged Israel twenty-three years (*Judg.* 10:1, 2); Jair, the Gileadite, who judged Israel twenty-two years (*Judg.* 10:3, 4); Ibzan, of Bethlehem, who judged Israel seven years (*Judg.* 12:8-10); Elon, of Zebulun, who judged Israel ten years (*Judg.* 12:11, 12); Abdon, of Pirathon, who judged Israel eight years (*Judg.* 12:13-15).



We learn from *Hosea* something of the erroneous reasoning of the Israelites. It was the sort of superstitious thinking that would easily be current among peasants. Yielding to that temptation was the beginning of the long series of afflictions recorded in *Judges*. The new land had been conquered in Jehovah's name. His ark rested in the central shrine at Shiloh. To acknowledge Baal was, therefore, disloyalty. It was the tendency on the part of the people to divide their loyalty between Jehovah and Baal that brought Joshua out of his retirement to deliver his farewell challenge: "Put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the river and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah. And if it seem evil to you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah" (*Josh. 24: 14, 15*).

"In the book of Judges," says Dr. A. B. Davidson, "we are shown the origin of that complication which the canonical prophets have to unravel."<sup>4</sup> The prophets knew that Israel had but one claim to continuance in the land—namely, loyalty to him who had given it to them. There are times when high and noble truths have to be taught in hard and rough ways. It was so in the days of the judges. This period constitutes the iron age of Israel. War was the common pursuit. War asks for devotion to the cause for which men are fighting. The devotion of war is its only virtue. Such examples of devotion as Gideon's, Samson's, and even Jael's—the latter even forgetting the great virtue of bedouin hospitality that she might strike down Sisera, the enemy of Israel and therefore of Israel's God—would hearten the men of a later day whose problems call for the same kind of courage and loyalty, but expressed in different ways.

Sir George Adam Smith compares and contrasts the fortunes of the Philistines and the Israelites in the land:<sup>5</sup> "Both Philistines and Hebrews were immigrants into the land for whose possession they fought through centuries. Both came to it from Egypt. Both absorbed the population they found upon it. Both succeeded to the Canaanite civilization, and came under the

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<sup>4</sup> A. B. Davidson, *Old Testament Prophecy*, p. 39.

<sup>5</sup> G. A. Smith, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 175 ff.

fascination of the Canaanite religion. Each people had a distinctive character of its own, and both were at different periods so victorious that either, humanly speaking, might have swallowed up the other. Indeed, so fully was the Philistine identified with the land that his name has become its name. . . . Yet Israel survived and the Philistine disappeared. Israel attained to a destiny equalled in the history of mankind only by Greece and Rome, whereas all the fame of the Philistines lies in having served as a foil to the genius of the Hebrews. What caused this difference? The same Hand (*Amos 9:7*) which brought in Israel from the east brought in the Philistine from the south. . . . It was not Israel's geographical position which prevented her from yielding to the Canaanite religion, or moved her, being still young and rude, to banish from her midst the soothsayers and necromancers, to whom the Philistines were wholly given over (*I Sam. 28:3; Isa. 2:6*). But from the first Israel had within her a spirit, and before her an ideal, of which the Philistines knew nothing, and always her prophets identified the purpose—which they plainly recognized—of her establishment on so isolated and secure a position with the highest ends of righteousness, wisdom, and service to all mankind."

### Questions

1. Which books do the Jews call the Former Prophets? Why are they so called?
2. Describe the settlement of the twelve tribes of Israel in Canaan.
3. What was the main peril of Israel in the land of Canaan?
4. What is meant by the term "judges"?
5. Name the chief judges and give the occasion of their deliverance.
6. Tell the story of *Ruth*. What is its significance?
7. What was the religious significance of the period of settlement in the land?
8. What particular points would you give most emphasis when teaching a lesson on the character of Joshua? of Deborah? of Gideon? of Samson? of Ruth?

### Topics for Further Study

*God's Part in the Hebrews' Conquest and Settlement of Canaan*  
Read *Joshua* and *Judges*. Consult also J. Garstang's *The Foundations of Bible History*.

#### *The Philistines*

Consult a Bible dictionary and an encyclopedia. R. A. S. Macalister's *The Philistines: Their History and Civilization* is recommended for students desiring to make a thorough study of the subject.

#### *The Map of Canaan after the Period of the Conquest*

Study a good map of the period under consideration. Note the location of the various Israelite tribes. Consult *Joshua* 13-22.

#### *Permanent Teaching Values in the Book of Ruth*

Study *Ruth* to discover what values of a permanent nature it contains. List these and show what applications of them may be made today.

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## CHAPTER V

### THE RISE OF THE MONARCHY

(*I Samuel*; *II Samuel* 1-10; *I Chronicles* 10-17)

#### Bible Readings—

*I Samuel* 3: 1-21—The Calling of Samuel

*I Samuel* 10: 17—11: 15—The Beginning of the Monarchy

*II Samuel* 2: 1-4; 5: 1-5—The Beginnings of David's Reign

*II Samuel* 5: 6-12—The Establishment of a National Capital

*II Samuel* 6: 1-19—The Establishment of a Religious Capital

The books *I* and *II Samuel* center around the great personalities who have to do with the establishment of the monarchy and with its early fortunes. These books may be divided thus:

- (1) *I Samuel* 1-12—Samuel's Leadership;
- (2) *I Samuel* 13-31—Saul and David;
- (3) *II Samuel* 1-20—David;
- (4) *II Samuel* 21-24—Miscellaneous Material.

During the period of the judges the government of the people was largely that of tribal leaders. There was no national unity. Further, there had been no continuity in the work of the judges. When the need arose, a leader was forthcoming; but when that leader died, things lapsed to where they were before. The next danger found the people unprepared to meet it. It is true, the high priest, Eli, retained his position, and the tabernacle at Shiloh formed a rallying-point for the people. But Eli's sons proved unworthy to succeed him, and nothing was to be hoped for from the priesthood in a political emergency. What was needed was a central political institution which would stand for and speak for all Israel; and that was a king. It fell to the lot of Samuel to lead the people in the transition days from the judges to the monarchy.

1. *The Work of Samuel.* Samuel's work occupies chapters 1-12 of the first book which bears his name. The narrative opens with the beautiful story of Samuel's birth and childhood, his service in the tabernacle at Shiloh, and the call from Jehovah that came to him there in the degenerate days of Eli's priesthood. (Read *I Samuel* 3: 1-21.) When he grew up he was

recognized at Shiloh as "a prophet of the Lord"; and, when Israel was defeated by the Philistines and the ark was taken (*I Sam.* 4), it was Samuel who led the people to repentance and to the successful battle of Ebenezer (*I Sam.* 5:1—7:14). From that time forward Samuel's position as judge was assured. With headquarters at Ramah, he made the circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, administering the nation's affairs (*I Sam.* 7:15-17).

But the shadow of the Philistines grew darker and darker. Both because of their numbers and because of their military skill they were the most formidable foe Israel had yet encountered. The Philistines were not nomad marauders; they were immigrants seeking a new home. They came with wheeled vehicles in which they transported their wives and movable property. They were Westerners with a capacity for organization. They settled in cities and were bound together by a confederacy which contrasted with the loose federation of the Israelites. They maintained a standing army. Their possession of iron weapons gave them an advantage with which the Israelites could not cope. For over a half century they dominated Palestine. Their spoilers were constantly prowling through the land, seizing Israel's harvests. To hold the land in subjection, the Philistines established garrisons at certain points. Among these were Beth-shean at the foot of the valley of Jezreel, Michmash, Geba in Mount Ephraim, and Beth-shemesh near Jerusalem. Officials were appointed to gather taxes laid upon the Israelites and to keep watch upon their movements. Further, the Philistines took steps completely to disarm the subjugated people. "Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears: but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his ax. . . . So it came to pass in the day of battle that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people with Saul" (*I Sam.* 13:19-22).

The Philistine pressure was the real cause of the popular clamor for a king. The people were eager for a strong military leader—a ruler, like Gideon, who could overpower the Philistine oppressor. It is significant that no general of Israel's army is mentioned in those days. We read, accordingly, that "all the



elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came unto Samuel and said unto him, Give us a king" (*I Sam.* 8:4, 5). Hesitating at first, but finally becoming convinced that it was the will of God, Samuel at length yielded to their importunity. The choice was made by lot, and Saul, in the name of Jehovah, was made the first king of Israel. (Read *I Samuel* 10:17—11:15.) Samuel now formally laid down his office (*I Sam.* 12).

2. *The Reign of Saul.* Saul is the second of the three outstanding personalities in the books of *Samuel*. He was a man from the soil, like Oliver Cromwell in the days of the Puritan revolt in England. The account of his reign occupies the remainder of *I Samuel*, but throughout the narrative Samuel and David figure as prominently as Saul himself. Saul was a brave leader, conducting some notable military campaigns. By a swift attack he freed the besieged city of Jabesh-gilead. With the brilliant assistance of his son Jonathan, the garrison of Michmash was wrested from the Philistines, and their hold on the central valley was broken (*I Sam.* 14). But, although he "vexed" Moab, Edom, and Amalek (*I Sam.* 14:47—15:35), he could not completely subdue the Philistines. He could fight them to a standstill in the fastnesses of his native Benjamin but was no match for them in the open plain. He was at war with them in the valley of Elah when David, a young man from Bethlehem, who happened to be visiting the Hebrew army in which his brothers were soldiers, by a single deed of prowess put new life into the conflict. We read that "the princes of the Philistines went forth, and it came to pass, as often as they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by" (*I Sam.* 18:30). The women, also, came out from the towns, when he returned from battle, singing:

"Saul hath slain his thousands,  
And David his ten thousands."

In these jubilations Saul's own son, Jonathan, took an enthusiastic part. Jealousy took possession of Saul's soul. Was Jonathan conspiring to make David king? Saul lost his self-control, and five attempts were made on David's life. David was finally compelled to flee and live the life of an outlaw (*I Sam.* 21-31). His resourcefulness is shown in those outlaw



days as in no other period of his life. His exploits have been compared with those of Robert Bruce, the hero of the wars of Scottish independence.

David was not with the army when King Saul made his last stand against the Philistines at mount Gilboa (*I Sam.* 31). It is doubtful whether his presence would have changed the outcome. Meanwhile, his mobilization of the south country prepared the way for him to strike a decisive blow against the Philistine tyranny when he became king of Israel. At mount Gilboa Saul's army was cut to pieces, and Saul and his oldest three sons died on the field. The men of Jabesh-gilead, across the Jordan, in gratitude for what Saul had done for them, took the bodies of the slain king and his sons from the wall of Bethshean, where the Philistines had placed them, and gave them proper burial.

3. *Saul's Character.* Saul's was a notable personality. He had a commanding presence; "from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." He was a good soldier and possessed both courage and military skill. But he had a bad disposition. This showed itself, first, against his own son Jonathan (*I Sam.* 14), and it grew constantly worse as Saul was reminded by Samuel of his religious duty. *I Samuel* 15 records the first conflict between the prophetic and the royal authority. This conflict reappears again and again throughout the later history of the monarchy. It should not be forgotten that Saul owed his kingship to Samuel and that Saul had no right to be an autocrat. He was chosen to be what we today should call a "constitutional monarch"—not an absolute one. When Saul assumed absolute powers, he transgressed the rights which had been bestowed upon him. Accordingly, Samuel, the spokesman of Jehovah and the champion of the people, felt himself in duty bound to oppose the king's pretensions, and, later, to withdraw entirely his support from Saul. When Saul willfully disobeyed the prophetic command to make complete disposition of the Amalekites, upon whom a ban had rested since the days of Moses, Samuel gave him up. Then even Saul's self-respect deserted him, for he sought counsel of a witch, whose kind he had formerly condemned and sought to exterminate. Saul's end was as pathetic as the beginning of his career had been promising. The position of Israel at Saul's death was practically what

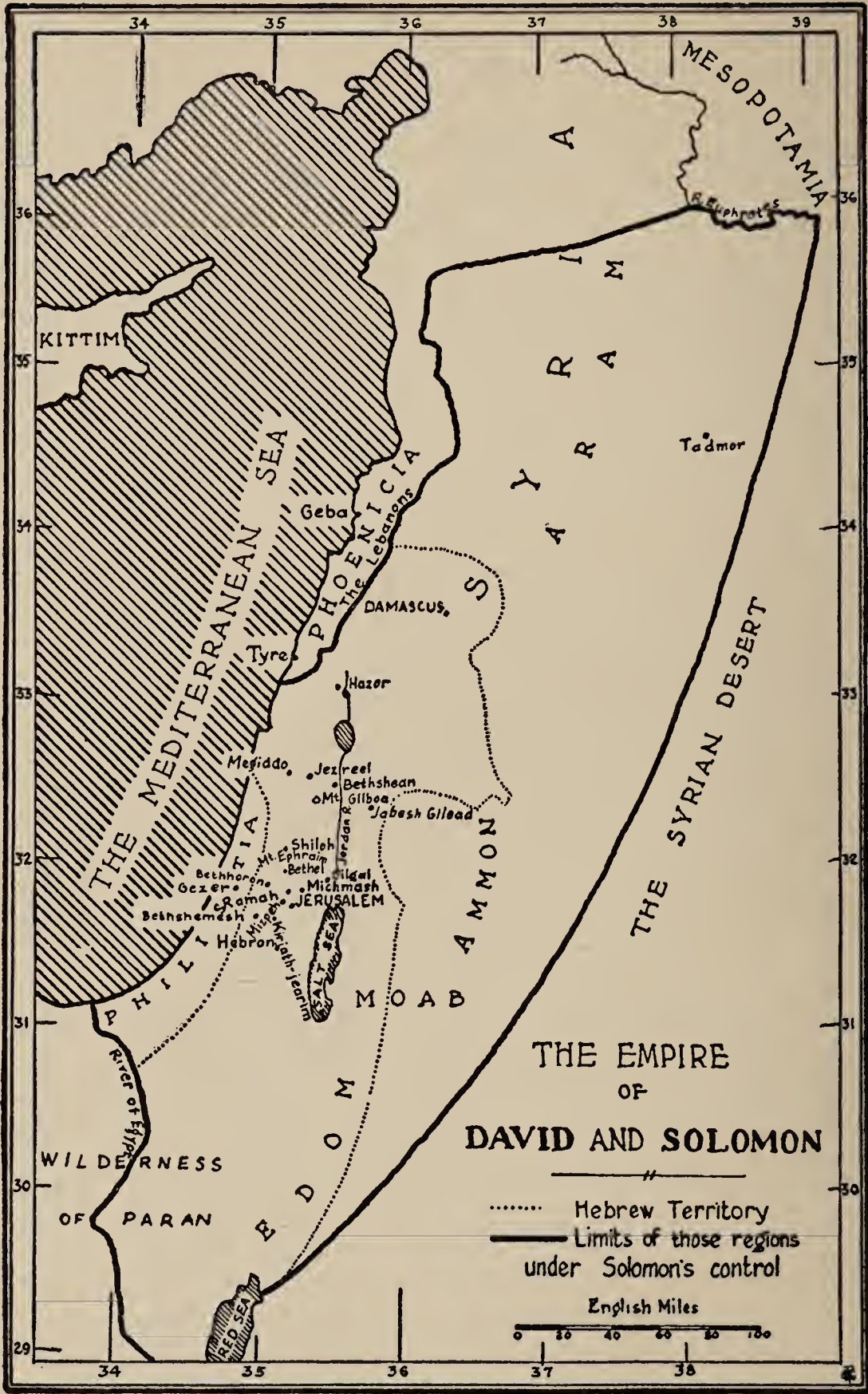
it was when he was made king. The Philistines dominated the land. Saul had failed in his task because he could not rule his own spirit.

4. *David's Reign at Hebron.* The victory of the Philistines had shaken the unity of the land. Was the monarchy to be a failure? Meanwhile, the men of Judah invited David to return from his exile in the south and to rule over them. For seven and a half years David reigned at Hebron. After an unfortunate civil war between Judah and Benjamin, in which Abner, who had sought to perpetuate Saul's line, was killed, David was made king over all Israel. (**Read II Samuel 2:1-4; 5:1-5.**) The Philistines, who considered David a vassal, opposed his being made king. The result was that in a notable battle in the plain of Rephaim they were so decisively defeated as never again to be a serious menace to Israel.

David then moved to take Uru-salem (Jerusalem), the stronghold of the Jebusites, and make it his capital. (**Read II Samuel 5:6-12.**) Kittel calls his choice of this site one of the marks of his genius. It was as neutral as the District of Columbia in the United States and therefore admirably calculated to unite Benjamin and Judah. The city—whose name, Uru-salem, derived from an old god, Salem, in whom we may recognize the deity Melchizedek worshiped—had an ancient history, and until David's time it had resisted all attacks upon it. Even the Philistines had not been able to take it. David's capture of it gave him great prestige. With it as a center, he was in position to organize a kingdom which embraced the whole land.

The government now had a capital and a royal residence; but David did not stop there. Unlike Saul, who had no interest in the institutions of religion and who allowed the ark of Jehovah to remain in an obscure resting place, he was next concerned to make Jerusalem the religious capital of the nation. (**Read II Samuel 6:1-19.**) He brought the ark from Kirjath-jearim with great ceremony and placed it in a tent specially provided for it. He wished visibly to subordinate the crown to the ark, the nation to God. We are told that later he would have built a temple but was restrained by the prophet Nathan (*II Sam.* 7:2-4). The ark was a badge of union between the north and the south. It had been enshrined at Shiloh in Ephraim in the north, and it had long rested in the territory of Judah in the







south. Thus it united the north and the south on a religious basis, as Jerusalem had united them on a political basis.

Israel was now a nation. The monarchy was firmly established. What would be its fate?

5. *David's Reign at Jerusalem.* Jerusalem henceforth was to be known as "the city of David." His kingdom was now established. What there was of it he had created himself. The tribes had all united under his scepter. It remained to be seen how strong that union would be.

There are two ways by which to weld tribes or states into a nation. One is by rallying them for war against a common foe; the other is by engaging them in a program of public works. Circumstances determined that David should employ the former and Solomon the latter. David's activity at Jerusalem was certain to excite the envy of the nations around him. As we have seen, the Philistines were the first to challenge his aggressiveness, and they were turned back in a decisive defeat. David captured a fortress called Metheg-ammah, which controlled the approach to Jerusalem, and we hear no more of the Philistine foe during his reign. Moab was the next neighbor to trouble him, and he so completely subdued that ancestral foe that it did not regain its independence until the days of Ahab (*II Kgs.* 3: 4, 5). The success of David over Moab caused the Ammonites alarm, and they summoned the help of three neighboring states. With the brilliant assistance of Joab, David completely subdued them. Edom and Amalek suffered similar fates. Not the least significant of his victories was that over the Arameans of Damascus who were reduced to tribute. As a result of these wars, David's dominion extended from the valley between the Lebanons to the Gulf of Akabah, and from the Mediterranean to the Syrian desert. "It was now a state which had the right to be rated as a commanding factor in the life of the Near East."

### Questions

1. Give the divisions of *I* and *II Samuel*.
2. What led to the establishment of the monarchy?
3. What qualifications did Saul possess for the kingship?
4. In what respects was Saul successful as a king? In what respects was he a failure?

5. What qualifications did David possess for the kingship? What experiences fitted him for his task?
6. Trace the steps by which David established the monarchy.
7. What position did David give his kingdom?
8. What practical lessons for your own life as a leader can you find in:
  - (1) The experience of the child Samuel?
  - (2) The conflict between Samuel and Saul?
  - (3) The character of Saul?
  - (4) The attitude of David toward the ark?

### Topics for Further Study

#### *A Comparative Study of Saul and David*

Read carefully *I* and *II Samuel* and in parallel columns make a list of the strong and the weak traits in the character of Saul and of David. Consult R. Kittel's *Great Men and Movements in Israel*. Write a brief summary of your findings.

#### *The Effect of the Monarchy on the Religion of Israel*

The first volume of Æsterley and Robinson's *A History of Israel* will throw much light on this subject.

#### *Jerusalem*

With the help of a Bible, a concordance, a Bible dictionary, and an encyclopedia, discover what you can about the geographic situation, the historical development, and the political and spiritual significance of Jerusalem. Consult also G. A. Smith's *Jerusalem* (2 vols.).

#### *Teaching Values in the Rise of the Monarchy*

Glance through a year's series of Sunday school lessons (either Uniform or Graded) and note the lessons which treat this period either as a whole or in part. Study these lessons and discover the teaching values emphasized in them. Criticize constructively the use made of the Biblical materials. Have the writers of the lessons caught the real values in the Biblical narrative? Have they applied them fairly? Have they treated them effectively? How could the lessons be improved?

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## CHAPTER VI

# THE REIGNS OF DAVID AND SOLOMON

(*II Samuel 11-24; I Kings 1-11; I Chronicles 18-29;  
II Chronicles 1-9*)

### Bible Readings—

*II Samuel 11: 1-12: 23*—David's Sin and Repentance

*I Kings 1: 1-53*—Solomon's Accession to the Throne

*I Kings 10: 1-29*—Solomon's Wealth and Wisdom

*I Kings 8: 1-66*—Solomon's Dedication of the Temple

*I Kings 11: 1-13*—Solomon's Undoing

1. *Foreign Relations under David.* Israel was now a well established power, and David was able to enjoy the fruits of his labors. His wars had brought him great gains. Of the vast quantity of spoil taken in the several wars in which he engaged, David dedicated a large part to the service of Jehovah. These offerings were increased by presents from kings whose perils he had relieved. In national affairs as in private business, a name once established carries with it prestige. Friendly relations existed between David and Hiram, the king of Tyre. "The Phœnicians and the Israelites were in their situation and habits, each other's complements, the former being devoted to commerce and the mechanical arts, and the latter being engaged almost exclusively in pastoral and agricultural occupations. A profitable trade could consequently be carried on between the two peoples; and from Hiram, David obtained both workmen and materials for the building he projected."<sup>1</sup> It is to be remembered that it was David who projected the building of the Temple and prepared the materials for it, though the actual construction of the sacred edifice was left to Solomon.

2. *Internal Affairs under David.* David showed equal capacity in organizing the internal affairs of his kingdom. We read of such officers of state as "the recorder," "the scribe," "the chief of the levy," "the king's counselor." The army also was thoroughly organized. Besides "the host," or national army, there was the famous bodyguard of Cherethites, Pelethites, and

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<sup>1</sup> G. W. Wade, *Old Testament History*, (5th ed.), 1908, p. 255.



Gittites, and the smaller bodies of heroes, such as "the Thirty" and "the Three." The administration of justice centered in the king (*I Chr.* 18: 14).

3. *David's Domestic Life.* Like other ancient Oriental kings, David multiplied wives as he multiplied other possessions, and his covetousness in this respect led him into the great sin for which the prophet Nathan rebuked him, and for which he suffered most of his misfortunes. (Read *II Samuel* 11: 1—12: 23.) Oriental rulers generally have been the victims of their harems. David was to see his oldest son, Ammon, go the way of his own licentiousness and outrage his half-sister Tamar (*II Sam.* 13), only to be slain by her own brother Absalom. Absalom was banished from his father's court, and, though he was allowed to return through the strategy of the wise woman of Tekoah (*II Sam.* 14), the estrangement from his father led him to plot to seize the throne. Because of his many cares and his advancing years, David's administration of justice had given cause for complaint. With friendly speech and ingratiating manner, and the promise of swifter justice if he were to become king, "Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel" from David (*II Sam.* 15:6). Finally, by the irony of history, Absalom was proclaimed king at Hebron, and David, not knowing how far the conspiracy had gone, fled towards the Jordan, accompanied by his faithful bodyguard and the generals Joab and Abishai. Absalom entered Jerusalem. He was now in possession of the resources of the state. But the traitor was tricked by Hushai, a faithful friend of David, who remained in the city and persuaded the usurper to delay his pursuit of the king until he himself was established on the throne. That delay permitted David to escape east of the Jordan, where the eastern tribes, which had remained faithful, supported him; and when Absalom finally advanced, the old military skill of Joab prevailed. Absalom perished at the hands of Joab, and, though the king saved his crown, he lost another son. He returned to his capital a broken man.

"We might suppose that the drama of guilt and atonement had now come to an end. Bathsheba's little son dead, Tamar ravished, Ammon dead, Absalom dead, the king, barefoot, weeping, and with his head covered, fleeing from the palace and place of his splendor—had not all this been punishment enough? But

only the grave was to offer him peace.”<sup>(2)</sup> Those around him now began to conspire about his successor. Adonijah was favored by the old warrior Joab and the old priest Abiathar. Solomon was supported by Nathan the prophet and Zadok the priest. Adonijah was next in seniority, but Bathsheba had asked the throne for her son Solomon—and David was not able to deny her. Plagued by conscience and tormented by the fear which Nathan aroused that Adonijah might prove another Absalom, the unhappy king commanded that Solomon should be proclaimed king. (Read I Kings 1: 1-53.)

4. *David's Character.* The greatest geniuses often have human limitations which prove their undoing. David's personal life was not as worthy as his public life. The passionate nature that could dare brave deeds and sing stirring songs plunged him into temptations from which he did not always emerge unscathed. The dark deed which ruined the home of Uriah, and David's coarse polygamy, cannot be condoned. David sinned grievously, but he repented profoundly. Honest piety seems always to have been a fundamental element of his spiritual being. Worship with him was not a matter of political expediency but of personal need. It is because David's religion rings true that he was called “a man after God's own heart.” In sincere humility he accepted the results of his sins and bore his chastisement without murmuring. In a very real sense he epitomizes the history of his people. Lifted out of obscurity by the divine call, banished from his land for no fault of his own, winning his way back through much tribulation, falling a prey to fleshly lusts in the hour of his triumph, exiled because of his sins, he yet discovered the depths of divine mercy and left a legacy of faith in his songs of penitence and hope.<sup>(3)</sup>

Solomon presents the greatest possible contrasts with David. David was a shepherd lad and grew up in the school of hardship; Solomon was the child of the harem and grew up in the heavy atmosphere of luxury. David had to create his kingdom; Solomon inherited his. David was a genius in acquisition but failed in administration—he did not even train his own children well; Solomon had a talent for administration, for which he seems to have been carefully trained. While both had fine native ability,

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<sup>2</sup> R. Kittel, *Great Men and Movements in Israel*, p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. G. Matheson, *The Representative Men of the Bible*, 1902.



David received no formal instruction; Solomon, however, was given a generous education—his wisdom became famous (*I Kgs.* 4: 30-34).

5. *Peace and Prosperity under Solomon.* Solomon's task was to conserve and develop a kingdom which had been bequeathed to him. He was a man of peace, and peace makes its concessions. Damascus and Edom did not remain under his rule (*I Kgs.* 11). He then wisely fortified the remaining boundaries. Hazor, Megiddo, the Beth-horons, and Gezer, on the north and west, and Tadmor (*II Chr.* 8: 4-6) on the east, were made impregnable, and the fortifications of Jerusalem were strengthened. Solomon was a good ruler. He administered the affairs of the kingdom in such a way as to win a name for himself.

When peace is properly used, it leads to prosperity. Solomon's reign, accordingly, developed wealth. The king became a great trader. Israel had many valuable products for exportation, such as wheat, wine, oil, balm, and honey (*Ezek.* 27:17); and trade with Tyre on the north and Arabia and Ophir on the east was established; and Solomon developed a fleet on the Red Sea. The imports were gold, silver, ivory, rare woods, precious stones, spices, and rare and curious birds and animals. Solomon also organized an important trade in horses with Egypt and with the peoples of the north. The queen of Sheba marveled at his wealth. (**Read I Kings 10: 1-29.**) Solomon's growing wealth increased his perils from foreign states; hence he contracted numerous foreign marriages. His most powerful friends were King Hiram of Tyre and the Pharaoh of Egypt.

Within his borders, Solomon preserved the unity of his kingdom by building the Temple. If there was any one thing which would appeal to all the people it was this. It had been the dream of David, and it perpetuated the tradition of Moses. The Temple was seven years in building. The stone for it was quarried beneath the city of Jerusalem. The timbers were brought from the forests of Lebanon. The gold with which the cedar was overlaid was imported from Ophir. The architect was a certain Hiram, or Hiram Abi, who is described as the son of an Israelite mother and a Tyrian father (*I Kgs.* 7: 13, 14). The Temple was not a large structure; its massive walls enclosed an interior only about 105 feet long and 30 feet wide. This was divided into three sections: (1) the porch, facing the east; (2) the holy place; and



(3) the holy of holies. In front of the porch were two pillars, 18 feet in circumference and 27 feet in height, surmounted by capitals  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet high. These pillars were called Jachin and Boaz. In the court beyond the porch was the altar of burnt offering. Near it was the bronze sea, supported by twelve brazen oxen, three facing each point of the compass. Beside it were ten smaller lavers, moving on wheels. In the holy place was the golden altar of incense, a golden table for the shew-bread, and ten golden lamp-stands. In the holy of holies was the ark, overshadowed by cherubim carved of olive wood and overlaid with gold, their extended wings stretching from wall to wall. The dedication of the Temple was the most splendid festival in Jewish history. (**Read I Kings 8: 1-66.**)

6. *Luxury and Oppression under Solomon.* The Temple was soon dwarfed by the royal residence, which was thirteen years in building and comprised: (1) the house of the forest of Lebanon, so named from the quantity of cedar wood used in it; (2) the porch of pillars; (3) the porch of the throne, the judgment hall in which was placed the famous throne of ivory and gold; (4) the king's private palace; and (5) the palace of the Pharaoh's daughter. The construction of these edifices and the establishment of the court on a commensurate scale involved vast expense. Solomon maintained an enormous domestic establishment. When we read that his provisions for one day were "thirty measures (the measure has been approximated as eleven bushels) of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, besides harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl" (*I Kgs. 4: 22, 23*), we are tempted to doubt the figures, but when we read that "he had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines" (*I Kgs. 11: 3*) we can well understand that he needed large resources. To meet his financial budget, Solomon divided the land into twelve fiscal districts, each having the supply of the royal expenses for a month at a time. In making these divisions, Solomon ignored to a large extent the old tribal boundaries, his purpose no doubt being to weaken tribal feeling in the interest of a more thoroughly unified nation. We read, further, of 550 governors who pressed his subjects to hard service. In the end the backs of the people broke under the strain of oppression. One of Solomon's own taskmasters led a revolt.

The uprising was suppressed by force, and the leader, Jeroboam, fled to Egypt. But the fate of the united kingdom was sealed; its doom was written from within. Solomon's son was to reap the harvest of the seed his father had sown.

7. *Solomon's Character.* Solomon's reign began as fair as a day in June. Though he was a son of the harem, he chose wisdom as his portion. For forty years he held his kingdom, never essentially one, to a program of united effort in trade and public works. He created commerce and built the Temple. But the creation of wealth only fosters luxury, and luxury, then as now, expressed itself in excessive building. "The king's love of splendor became more and more oppressive to the people and he sank deeper and deeper into effeminacy and luxury, until at last he allowed himself to be seduced by his heathen wives into an open breach with the theocratic institutions by erecting for their sakes sanctuaries for their gods in the very shadow of the temple of Jehovah."<sup>4</sup> (Read I Kings 11:1-13.) Whatever his purpose politically, Solomon's polygamy became his undoing. "Some men's sins are evident, going before unto judgment, and some men they follow after." In this case they followed after. Solomon sowed, but his son Rehoboam reaped.

### Questions

1. What methods did David employ to unite the Israelite tribes and to promote their collective interests?
2. Give an account of David's domestic life.
3. What are the strong and the weak points of David's character?
4. What contrasts to David are found in Solomon?
5. How did Solomon develop his kingdom?
6. Name the public works he engaged in.
7. What was the result of his ambitious program? What was the effect of his reign in the land?
8. When teaching a group of adults, what practical applications to modern life would you draw from:
  - (1) David's sin with Bathsheba?
  - (2) Solomon's acquisition of wealth?
  - (3) The dedication of the Temple?

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<sup>4</sup> G. F. Cehler, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Eng. tr. by Geo. E. Day, 1885, p. 384.

- (4) Jeroboam's rebellion?
- (5) Solomon's later devotion to foreign gods?

### Topics for Further Study

#### *David's Influence on Hebrew Religion*

Consult Eesterley and Robinson's *A History of Israel*, Vol. I, and *Hebrew Religion*. If these books are not available, make use of encyclopedias, Bible dictionaries, or other helps which are available.

#### *Solomon's Influence on Hebrew Religion*

Consult the same sources as in the foregoing.

#### *Teaching Values in the Life of David*

Consider the pupils of your church school class (if you are a teacher, the pupils whom you teach; if yourself a pupil, the members of your own class). What stories from David's life do you consider appropriate for use in your class? List these stories. What lessons would you draw from each? Be sure to study the Biblical materials before making your decisions.

#### *Teaching Values in the Life of Solomon*

See the suggestions under the foregoing topic and follow the same procedure.

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## CHAPTER VII

# THE NORTHERN KINGDOM: ELIJAH AND ELISHA

(*I Kings 12-22; II Kings 1-10; II Chronicles 10-19*)<sup>(1)</sup>

### Bible Readings—

*I Kings 12:1-20*—The Secession of the Northern Tribes

*I Kings 12:25-33*—The Establishment of Worship in the North

*I Kings 16:29-33*—The Domination of Baal Worship

*I Kings 18:17-40*—The Contest between Two Religions

*II Kings 6:8-23*—The Influence of Elisha

Scarcely had Solomon been gathered to his fathers, when the united monarchy came to an end. There had been rumblings of the quake which then rent the kingdom in two. *I Kings 11* tells us that the Lord raised up three adversaries against Solomon: Egypt, Damascus, and Jeroboam. The serious discontent of the northern tribes focused about Jeroboam. We first hear of him in connection with the construction of the fortifications of Jerusalem (*I Kgs. 11:27*). He won the royal favor and was placed in charge of the enforced labor of Ephraim. There he placed himself at the head of the "strikers" and openly rebelled against Solomon. Solomon, as we have seen, quickly repressed the rebellion, and Jeroboam fled to Egypt. But Solomon was not cold in his grave when Jeroboam returned. Then the long pent-up fury and the slumbering jealousy between the northern tribes and Judah burst forth. (Read **I Kings 12:1-20**.) Rehoboam, Solomon's son, had invited the tribes to a parley at

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<sup>1</sup> The Sources. The two books *I* and *II Kings*, which, like *I* and *II Samuel*, were originally one, are our principal source for the history of this period. They occupy about sixty pages of the English Bible but cover a period of four hundred years. That is a long period to be covered in so short a space, especially in view of the important events included. The record is necessarily fragmentary and condensed. Long reigns are sometimes disposed of in a few verses. The explanation is, the whole history is presented from a religious point of view. Whenever the narrative begins to expand, it is plain that the matter has religious significance. From *I Kings 12* the narrative gives us the most important points in the history of the divided kingdoms. In *Kings* the story of the two kingdoms is interwoven; in *Chronicles* only that of the Southern Kingdom, with incidental references to the Northern Kingdom, is given. Both records were written by men interested primarily in the Southern Kingdom. These facts make it difficult for the reader to keep the history of the two kingdoms distinct. In this study the kingdoms are treated separately.





Shechem, the ancient capital; he wished a popular ratification of his succession to the throne. The northern tribes, however, distrusted the ruler, put his commissioner to death, and revolted. They were distrustful of kings who were not chosen by the people. Accordingly, they refused to recognize Rehoboam and chose instead Jeroboam to be king of Israel. He and his immediate successors are rightly called "kings of Israel," since they were chosen by the majority of the tribes. The revolt and secession of the ten northern tribes is the price David paid for his sin and Solomon for his arrogance. The great nation which these kings built was now rent asunder.

1. *The Kingdom of Israel.* The monarchy was divided into two kingdoms. The old rivalry between the northern tribes and Judah was now to take the form of a long civil war—a "civil war" because fundamentally the two peoples were one. They were one in a common heritage, one in spirit, and one in religion. It is but natural to dwell on the tragedy of the division. United Israel should have been a bulwark between Assyria and Egypt, a stabilizer of the world. No other people in the ancient world was so well fitted to fill that role. But it is folly to dwell on what might have been. It was better, no doubt, that the two sections should separate and meet their religious problems independently. The division insured, for example, that the almost constant peril of Baalism would be segregated, at least for a time, in the northern area, and that Jerusalem would be free for a while from its degenerating influences. Further, by the separation, the Southern Kingdom was exempted from those political intrigues which did so much to ruin the Northern Kingdom. To Jerusalem was reserved a mission far nobler than military ascendancy. It was to teach, and in the end did teach, lessons which no other capital taught, and to bring home to the world, truths which have outlasted empires.

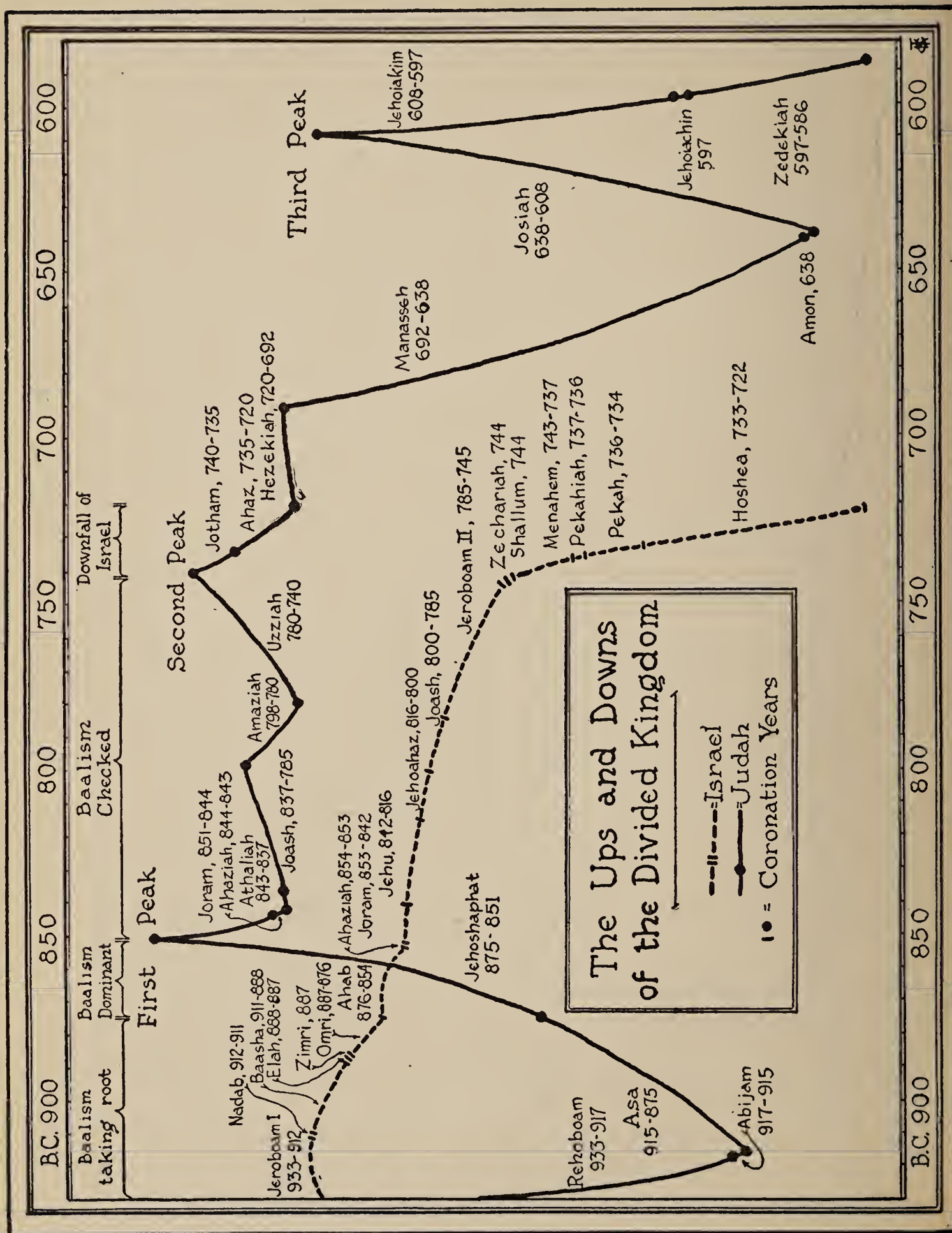
In the division of the realm, the Northern Kingdom, Israel, had every natural advantage. It had three times the territory of the Southern Kingdom, the more fertile soil, and the larger population. Great highways ran through the land, thus bringing trade and ideas from both the Nile and the Mesopotamian valleys, while her next neighbor was the wealthy and peaceful Tyre. On the other hand, the advantages of the Northern Kingdom brought corresponding perils. The great highways which



passed through its territory became open doors to invasion. Because of its geographic situation, it became a buffer state between Judah and the armies of Assyria and Syria. Because of its loss of the religious privileges of the Jerusalem Temple and its dependence upon the good will of its Baal-worshipping neighbor, Tyre, it developed a tolerance in religion which brought down upon it the wrath of the prophets.

The year of the division is now commonly accepted as 937 B. C. The kingdom of Israel came to an end with the fall of Samaria in 722 B. C. It continued, therefore, about 215 years. During that time there were nineteen kings, belonging to nine different families. There are four clearly defined periods in the history of this kingdom: in the first, the outstanding king was Jeroboam I; in the second, Ahab; in the third, Jehu; in the fourth, Hoshea. In the first period, Baalism took root; in the second, it was dominant; in the third, it was checked; in the fourth, the kingdom fell.

2. *Baalism Takes Root.* Jeroboam was to find that it was easier to tear apart than to build. He found himself without institutions and in the midst of a variety of conflicting interests. He had no capital, no army, and no temple. He made an effort to hold ancient Shechem as his capital, but failed, for Rehoboam, king of Judah, had an army of trained mercenaries, and he and his grandson Asa in turn attempted to make good their claim to sovereignty over the north (*I Kgs. 12:21-24; 15:16-22*). For two generations this hostility continued. Failing to unify Israel through a central capital, Jeroboam tried to rally his people by a symbol of worship. (**Read I Kings 12:25-33.**) Accordingly, he set up two gold bulls, one at the patriarchal shrine at Bethel, and the other at Dan, the seat of worship in the far north. A bull had once been set up as a symbol of Jehovah at Sinai (*Ex. 32*); but it was, too, the symbol of Baal. There was no thought on Jeroboam's part of substituting any other worship for that of Jehovah, but, by adopting a symbol which was definitely the symbol of Baal, he opened the door for a mixture of Baal worship and Jehovah worship which was to plague the kingdom to its death. Having lost the Levitical priesthood with the loss of the Temple, Jeroboam created a priesthood of his own from the rank and file of the people. Thus he won





for himself in history the unenviable reputation, "Jeroboam who made Israel to sin."

3. *Baalism Becomes Dominant.* The war between the little kingdoms dragged on. Another element was introduced into it by Rehoboam's grandson, Asa. The Northern Kingdom and Egypt had become allies. To offset the power of these allies, Asa made a treaty with Tabrimon, king of Damascus, the center of the growing young Syrian kingdom. The boundaries of Syria and the Northern Kingdom already overlapped and made conflict natural. Now that Syria and Judah were allies, it was inevitable that much friction would arise. For nearly two centuries there were wars between Israel and Syria. The threat of a Syrian advance aroused the army of the Northern Kingdom. One of its leaders, Zimri, deposed King Elah and usurped the throne; but he was only a seven days' king, for Omri, the head of the army, asserted his power and seized the throne (*I Kgs. 16: 8-20*). Omri was one of the great kings of Israel. His power overshadowed that of Judah; he forced Moab to pay tribute; he made Tyre an ally, and thus effectually blocked the advance of Damascus. This alliance was cemented by the marriage of Jezebel, a Tyrian princess, to his son, Ahab. Further, Omri made Samaria, "the watch tower," his almost impregnable capital. Recent excavations show it to have been a capital worthy of a great kingdom.

All these gains are offset in the account of *I Kings* by the price which was paid for the Tyrian alliance—namely, Jezebel. She was a champion of Baal worship. (**Read *I Kings 16: 29-33.***) That worship included not only idolatry but indecent orgies. Women sacrificed their virtue in the service of the Baal to increase temple revenues. Prophets of Jehovah who protested were put to death. "Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him."

The result was the appearance of Elijah the Tishbite, whose lifelong conflict with the king is one of the most conspicuous features of Ahab's reign. Elijah was the leader of the opposition to the Tyrian cult. The people of the Northern Kingdom were divided between the two religions, Jehovah worship and Baal worship. They had come to the parting of the ways. It was a question which had long been brewing: Was Jehovah alone



sufficient for all Israel's needs? Elijah demanded a definite answer. (**Read I Kings 18: 17-40.**) "The whole future of the nation hung on that decision. . . . For Israel to acknowledge Baal was to enthrone force, and when men revered force on the throne of heaven, the inevitable result would be to make their king, the divine representative on earth, exercise lawless force. To acknowledge Jehovah was to worship One who loved justice and hated iniquity, and his representative on earth, the anointed of Jehovah, would govern after the will of him in whose name he ruled."<sup>2</sup> The issue at Carmel was not, therefore, a contest between two names for God; it was a contest to the finish between natural powers and the principles of righteousness. Mount Carmel, which might be said to be the very heart of the Baal country, was chosen as the scene of the test. The sacrifices were laid. The priests of Baal in vain appealed to their god—a sun god—to consume their offerings. All day long, while the sun shone, they cried piteously but in vain. Then, as night was coming on, the altar of Jehovah blazed with fire from heaven. It was a complete triumph. The spell of Baalism was broken. For a time at least, the people turned to God. /

That the advent of Jezebel and her Baal worship meant the introduction of a new and foreign principle in the kingdom of Israel was manifest in a concrete way a little later. Ahab was improving his summer estate at Jezreel and desired Naboth's vineyard in order to have a better outlook. Naboth refused to part with it; it was an ancestral possession, and, by the old law of Israel, he was within his right. Ahab accepted Naboth's decision. But Jezebel had a different idea, learned at her father's court. To her, a king was no king who could not command all the resources of his realm. To her, a king was subject to no law in relation to his subjects; there was no limit to his power but his own will. To Elijah and the prophets, however, the king was the anointed of Jehovah; he could not annul the law of God. So Elijah went down to Jezreel and announced to Ahab that the blood of Naboth, who had been put to death at Jezebel's command, was crying aloud for vengeance, and that, because Jehovah was the God of justice, Ahab should die as Naboth had died.

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<sup>2</sup> Welch, *The Preparation for Christ in the Old Testament*, 1932, p. 83.

4. *Baalism Checked.* A new peril also helped check the desertion of the people to Baal, and rallied them behind the leadership of the prophets. The Syrians twice laid siege to Samaria, in the reigns of Omri and Ahab, and both times the city was saved. These reverses the Syrians attributed to the God of the Hebrews. During these troubled days the real leaders of the people were the prophets of Israel (*I Kgs. 20*).

Elijah's successor was Elisha. In his day, Syria was again oppressing the kingdom. The Syrians had been made bold by the withdrawal of the Assyrians, who for a time had taken part in the affairs of the west. During the period of the Syrian oppression, Elisha interposed again and again for his people. He was the most powerful personality of his day (*II Kgs. 5*). A recommendation from him was of great weight with the king and with the commander of the army. (**Read *II Kings 6: 8-23*.**) His fame extended beyond the borders of Israel; for example, Jehoshaphat of Judah knew that the word of God was to be found with him (*II Kgs. 3: 12*), and the Syrian king, Benhadad III, sent his servant to consult him (*II Kgs. 8: 7, 8*). Elisha was, like Samuel, a great pastoral soul, who was sent to show forth the goodness of the Lord, as Elijah had been sent to exhibit his righteousness.

The first step in discrediting Baalism had been the destruction of the prophets of Baal. The second step was to be the fate of the royal house. Israel was now to see that Jehovah was the God of history, and that history was a moral process. Ahab fell in battle, and the Syrians were again advancing against the land. That was what came to Israel for its Baal worship. The house of Omri was sinking, and a general judgment seemed to be breaking upon the land. There could no longer be any question as to the cause: Jehovah was angry with his people. It was Jehu, son of Nimshi, who was to be the avenger of Jehovah's honor. At the instance of Elisha, he was anointed king and immediately set himself to wipe out the stain of Baalism. The royal house, including Jezebel and her sons, was wiped out at a blow, and the priests of Baal were massacred (*II Kgs. 9, 10*). It was gruesome business, but fire had to be fought with fire. There are times when only a storm can carry out the divine will (*Ps. 148: 8*). Baalism was checked.



### Questions

1. What are the sources of the history of the divided kingdom? What is the nature of these sources?
2. Give the immediate and the remote causes of the disruption of the united kingdom.
3. Make a comparison of the two Hebrew kingdoms.
4. Into what periods may the history of the Northern Kingdom be divided? Name the principal king in each period.
5. Describe the rise and fall of Baalism in the Northern Kingdom.
6. What important truth for modern life may be drawn from a study of each of the following characters of this period?
  - (1) Rehoboam
  - (2) Jeroboam
  - (3) Jezebel
  - (4) Elijah
  - (5) Elisha

### Topics for Further Study

#### *"Kings" and "Chronicles"*

With the help of Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, and any other available reference books, find out all you can about the authorship, content, viewpoint, and style of the two books of *Kings* and of the two books of *Chronicles*. In what respects are these two accounts similar? In what respects do they differ?

#### *The Northern and the Southern Kingdoms*

In parallel columns make notes on the similarities and the differences between the two kingdoms. Consider such items as: geographic location and extent, relation to other nations, population, political development, religious influences and institutions, social life. Consult E. H. Rieu's *A History of Israel*, Vol. I.

#### *A Comparison of Elijah and Elisha in Character and Work*

Read *I Kings* 17-19, 21; *II Kings* 1-10, 13. Consult R. Kittel's *Great Men and Movements in Israel*.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### THE NORTHERN KINGDOM: AMOS

(*II Kings 10-14; II Chronicles 20-25; Amos*)

#### Bible Readings—

*II Kings 14: 23-27*—The Reign of Jeroboam II

*Amos 6: 3-6*—Amos' Description of the Upper Classes

*Amos 5: 4-24*—Amos' Message to Israel

*Amos 9: 8-15*—Amos' Last Word

The reform of Jehu was short-lived because it rested on a wrong foundation. It had proceeded on the belief that all that was needed was the extermination of the Baal-worshiping royal family and the destruction of the institutions of Baalism. Jehu had accomplished both; but the displeasure of Jehovah had not been removed, for, while Jehu had furiously destroyed Baal worship, he had not destroyed the golden bulls at Dan and Bethel. It was these idols of Jehovah which had so often led the Israelites to sin. By permitting them to remain undisturbed, Jehu failed to lead the nation to the pure worship and the righteous life which Jehovah required. As a matter of fact, Jehu succeeded in tearing down, but he was not able to build up. He was little more than a scourge. History was writing a new truth, which Israel was never to learn—namely, that Jehovah was a God of righteousness, and that an unrighteous life was as hateful to Jehovah in an Israelite as in a Baal worshiper. It was Israel's unrighteousness which led to its ultimate collapse.

Meanwhile a formidable foe was advancing. The Assyrians, under Shalmaneser II, were again moving westward. Before the power of Assyria, even Jehu had to bow. For more than a generation the house of Jehu maintained itself with difficulty.

1. *Better Days.* Under Jehoahaz, the immediate successor of Jehu, the political fortunes of Israel sank to their lowest ebb up to that time. In fact, the king was reduced almost to a vassal of Syria. Syrian armies took from Israel some of its holdings east of the Jordan. Fortunately for Israel, the Assyrians now began to press upon Syria, and this brought a measure of relief to the Northern Kingdom. Jehoash, Jehoahaz's son, even suc-

ceeded in winning back the territory which the Syrians had taken.

Then came the long reign of Jeroboam II, which lasted forty-one years, under whom the kingdom enjoyed its Indian summer. (**Read II Kings 14: 23-27.**) "He restored the coasts of Israel from the neighborhood of Hamath unto the Sea of the Arabah"; that is, the boundaries of the kingdom were extended almost as far as in the time of David. Jeroboam was able to accomplish this, only because Syria was passive and Assyria inactive. Three Assyrian kings in succession made no effort to maintain the claims of their empire in the west.

During this long peace, wealth multiplied. With wealth came luxury, and with luxury, all the vices which luxury brings in its train. Unfortunately the writer of *Kings* gives us a very meager account of this period. We learn much more about it from the prophet Amos, whom he does not even mention. Not only the king had a palace (the royal palace dates back to Omri), but many rich men also now had their palaces and their summer homes. "Every document of the times speaks to us of its build-ings. . . . Vast *palaces*, the name of which now comes in for the first time, are now built by wealthy grandees out of money extorted from the poor—there are summer houses in addition to winter houses." <sup>(1)</sup> Town life with its usual accompaniments flourished. Amos described the notable men of Samaria. (**Read Amos 6: 3-6.**) "There were all the temptations of rapidly acquired wealth, and all the dangers of an equally increasing poverty."<sup>(2)</sup> The rich grew hard; the poor became bitter. Injustice and oppression were flagrant. Religious ceremonies were attended with orgies. The Mosaic conception of God as a God of righteousness was dead.

2. *Amos*. It was at such a time, in the heyday of Jeroboam II's reign, that Amos appeared in Bethel, the royal shrine in the Northern Kingdom, and, at a religious feast, when the elite of the nation were present, announced that Jehovah was about to judge the nations around them, and that judgment would fall on Israel also. Amos was not a professional prophet like those of the royal court. He was a dresser of sycamore trees (*Amos 7: 14*). Since sycamore trees need very little attention, Amos

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<sup>1</sup> George Adam Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. I, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> G. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. I, p. 33.



found time also to herd sheep. Perhaps he disposed of his wool at Bethel. However that may be, he moved about enough to know the current of affairs. He heard the talk about the coming of the Assyrians, and his keen insight told him that the Assyrian was the scourge of Providence. The petty little kingdoms with their pride would be laid low. It was while he was herding his sheep at Tekoah that his call came. He was to be a "doomsman." For a time he delayed. He tells us that twice the summons came and that twice he asked God to spare the land to which he was sent (*Amos 7:1-6*). He was not willingly a doomsman. What is more, he believed that his prayer was heard, for Jehovah did spare the land: "The Lord repented concerning this. This shall not be, saith the Lord God." No true prophet preaches judgment without a prayer. When a prophet of God announces punishment, it is because punishment is due and only punishment can save. Amos said he had no choice in the matter: "The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" It was high time that Israel should be awakened from its insensitiveness; judgment was at the very door.

3. *Amos' Message.* The prophecy of Amos has been called Israel's bill of indictment. The little kingdoms enumerated in chapters 1 and 2 had all been guilty of cruelty and greed. Perhaps more was not to be expected of them, seeing the kind of gods they worshiped; nevertheless judgment was coming to them. Better things, however, were expected of Israel, who had Moses and the prophets. All their religion seemed to have done for them was to puff them up with the confidence that, being the chosen people of Jehovah, they were immune from judgment. Amos tells them that they have lost the power to draw a conclusion from premises. His words are like a sword-thrust: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth"—the words are Jehovah's—"therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities" (*Amos 3:2*). He pictures God as holding an inquest of perished nations. Were they worse than Israel, that only Israel should be spared? Warning after warning was in vain. "Ye have not returned unto me, saith the Lord" (*Amos 4:6*). Instead of showing repentance, the stupid, self-confident people were talking about a day of Jehovah which should vindicate them. What did they care about the coming of the Assyrians? Let them come—Jehovah would save his people! Their coming

would merely produce another day of judgment upon Israel's foes. So reasoned the people. "But," said Amos, "you are not reckoning with the God of Moses who gave you this land. He is a God of righteousness. The day for which you are asking will be a day of judgment upon you. Your sacrifices and offerings mean nothing to Jehovah—he despises them. He will not listen to your songs. If you want to please him, 'let judgment ['obedience' would be a better translation] roll down as waters, and righteousness as a perennial stream.' These are the sacrifices which God can accept; these are the only preparations for the day of Jehovah which will survive." (**Read carefully Amos 5: 4-24.**)

Amos' message was severe, but it was the reluctant severity of Jehovah. His aim was the repentance of Israel; when he piteously laid bare their sins—the oppression of the poor, the perversion of judgment, their immorality and their self-indulgence (*Amos 2: 6, 7; 6: 5, 6*)—it was not to fix their sins upon them, but to make their sins hateful in their eyes and lead them to repentance. Judgment is never the last word of a true prophet.

4. *Amos and Worship.* The law of Moses prescribed sacrifices and offerings which were to be presented at the sanctuary. Every Israelite was also required to appear before Jehovah—that is, to go up to the central sanctuary—three times a year. No prophet before Amos raised a question about such expressions of worship. By coming to the festivals the Israelites understood that they were remembering what their God had done for them, as we do by going to church and to the Lord's Supper. It had become a sign of loyalty on their part to keep these appointments, as it is with us to keep the appointments of the church. We are, therefore, startled to have Amos say as Jehovah's words: "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though you offer me your burnt offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. . . . Did ye bring sacrifice and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of David?" (*Amos 5: 21-25.*) At another time, he said: "Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression" (*Amos 4: 4.*)

Did Amos reject the established worship altogether, and



would he, if he had had his way, have swept away sacrifice and offerings, festivals and tithes? There are students of *Amos* who say so. The only acceptable service which Israel could render to Jehovah, they say, was the sacrifice of a righteous life. But while that sounds simple enough, it really assumes that worship is hostile to right conduct—that a man is more likely to be a good man without it. *Amos* does not say so. It is plain from what he says elsewhere that the men of his day were worshiping insincerely; that they were not really seeking communion with Jehovah in their worship, but were rendering it grudgingly as a tax to be paid for the divine favor. They were the same men who begrudged the cessation of business on the Sabbath (*Amos* 8:4-6) when they might have been making money. Their worship was a mockery because in it they were not seeking communion with God. In his rebuke of them, *Amos* anticipated Isaiah and Paul in their insistence that acceptable worship is that which is offered in sincerity.

5. *Amos' Philosophy of History.* As we read the book *Amos* we are made aware of a relentless sternness which makes us think of the prophet almost as an executioner. He seems never to relent. We must remember that he had his training in the school of nature where results follow causes and are not turned back because they bring suffering. He had discovered that there is a moral order in the world which it is as impossible to break as it would be to break the natural order. There is a natural order in the sinner's doom. "To him [*Amos*] the sequences which work themselves out through history and across nature are moral. Righteousness is the hinge on which the world hangs; loosen it and history and nature alike feel the shock."<sup>3</sup> History will punish a sinful nation; nature groans beneath the guilt of man. Jehovah is, therefore, the God of all nations as he is the God of all nature. It was Jehovah who brought the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir (*Amos* 9:7). God favors, not a nation, but character; not Israel, but righteousness. If men are righteous, they are on the side of God and enjoy the blessings of those who co-operate with the great purpose behind all things. If they are unrighteous, they are fighting against God, though they crowd his temple with their offerings and go on costly pilgrimages to his shrines.

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<sup>3</sup> G. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. I.



6. *Amos' Last Word.* Many scholars deny that the last eight verses of the book came from Amos. (Read Amos 9: 8-15.) They say that in such a prophecy as his there is no room for mercy. But those who take this position, while well within the canons of literary criticism, do not interpret the divine mind. With God, and with his prophets, the last word is not night, but day; not death, but life. This final oracle has a rightful place at the close of the book of Amos. Amaziah at Bethel had berated him and challenged him; he told him to go to Judah and prophesy there. These closing oracles were the prophet's response. The Northern Kingdom was doomed. Amaziah himself was soon to die in a foreign land. But for the little kingdom of Judah there was a brighter hope. The barren hills of that little kingdom were yet to blossom as a garden. Jehovah would find a way of bringing back his banished ones. A remnant would be saved. Such was Amos' final word—a word of mercy, assurance, and hope.

### Questions

1. What was the weakness of Jehu's reform?
2. Describe the condition of the land under Jehu's immediate successors.
3. Why is the reign of Jeroboam II called "Israel's Indian Summer"?
4. Describe the social conditions which characterized his reign.
5. Give an account of the personal life of Amos; of his call to be a prophet.
6. What was Amos' message to Israel?
7. Explain Amos' condemnation of worship.
8. What was Amos' philosophy of history?
9. What is Amos' last word?

### Topics for Further Study

#### *The Perils of Peace*

Study the time of Jeroboam II and Amos, giving particular attention to the prophet's pictures of the life of this era. Recall the very similar period of peace in the reign of Solomon. Compare the years of peace following the World War. What are some of the perils of peace?

*The Book of Amos*

Make a thorough study of *Amos*. With the help of Bible dictionaries and commentaries find out all you can about the author, the occasion of his prophecies, the style of his writings, the content of his message.

*Is Formal Worship Conducive to Right Living*

Consult J. Skinner's *Prophecy and Religion*, Chap. IX.

*Truths from Amos for Modern Life*

What truths of value for present-day life can you find in *Amos*? Consider the following modern problems: Economic inequalities and injustices; materialism; love of ease, pleasure, and luxury; nationalistic pride and prejudice; war; religious indifference; observance of the Lord's day; spiritual pessimism.

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## CHAPTER IX

# THE END OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM: HOSEA

(*II Kings 10-17; II Chronicles 20-25; Amos; Hosea*)

### Bible Readings—

*II Kings 17: 1-24*—The End of the Northern Kingdom

*Hosea 1: 1—3: 5*—Hosea's Tragic Experience

*Hosea 4: 1-14*—Israel's Unfaithfulness to Jehovah

*Hosea 11: 1-9*—Jehovah's Revelation of Love

*Hosea 14: 1-9*—Hosea's Message of Hope

1. *The Last Days of Israel.* Jeroboam II's long reign was followed by a succession of short reigns and a period of murder and violence. Hosea describes it as a period of "swearing, lying, and killing" (*Hos. 4: 2*). Jeroboam was the last of the kings of Israel who died in his bed. His son and successor, Zachariah, was killed within six months. The throne then became the football of conspirators. Shallum held it a month. Then Menahem seized it and tried to make himself secure by appealing to Assyria for protection. "In his day the Assyrian king, Pul, came into the land, and Menahem gave Pul one thousand talents of silver in order that he might stand by him and confirm his authority" (*II Kgs. 15: 19*). But Menahem's treachery did not profit him for long, and soon another usurper, Pekah, was on the throne intriguing with Damascus against Assyria. That brought the mighty Assyrian, Tiglath-pileser IV, to the west for vengeance. In 734 B. C. he invaded the land and deported many of the people. Two years later he captured Damascus and put Rezin, its king, to death. Pekah fell the victim of a conspirator named Hoshea who was allowed to raise himself to the throne on condition that he pay tribute to the Assyrian king. Tiglath-pileser himself died in 728 B. C. and was succeeded by Shalmaneser IV. The change led King Hoshea to intrigue with Egypt for support. That was the last straw. In 724 B. C. Shalmaneser attacked and besieged Samaria. The city offered a stubborn but futile resistance. Its fall was followed by the usual deportation. More than 27,000 inhabitants were sent into exile, and aliens were imported in their place. The population of the



land thus became a mongrel race, the Samaritans of later times. (Read II Kings 17: 1-24.)

Thus the kingdom of Israel was brought to an end in a little over two centuries. That its downfall preceded that of the inferior Southern Kingdom is due to the very advantages which made it superior, as enumerated in a preceding chapter. But the chief cause of the downfall, as indicated by the prophets Amos and Hosea, was the moral breakdown induced by the introduction of Baalism. It is for this reason that the common record concerning the kings of Israel is, "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord and followed the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin."

## 2. *Points to Be Remembered*

- (1) The Northern Kingdom fell in 722 B. C. and was never restored.
- (2) The chief kings of the Northern Kingdom were Jeroboam I, Omri, Ahab, Jehu, Jeroboam II, Pekah, and Hoshea; the chief prophets were Elijah, Elisha, Amos, and Hosea.
- (3) Two foreign foes harassed Israel—the Syrians in the early years, and the Assyrians in the later years of the kingdom. Of the former, Hazael and Benhadad are the kings mentioned. The contest with Syria lasted one hundred years and was ended by the interference of the Assyrians, who crushed both the Syrians and Israel. There were at least three invasions of Israel by the Assyrians: (a) by Shalmaneser II, to whom Jehu paid tribute (not mentioned in the Bible, but recorded on Assyrian monuments); (b) by Pul, a military adventurer, in the reign of Menahem (II Kgs. 15:19), who, later, under the official name, Tiglath-pileser IV, returned in the reign of Pekah (II Kgs. 15:29); and (c) by Shalmaneser IV, whose successor, Sargon II, took Samaria and deported 27,000 of the people.

3. *Hosea*. It was in the darkest days of the Northern Kingdom that Hosea delivered his prophecies. He was the only writing prophet the Northern Kingdom produced. (Amos, it will be remembered, came from the south.) All we know about Hosea we learn from the book he has left us. The mention of his

father's name indicates that he came from a family of standing. (Amos' father is not mentioned.) Amos as a prophet was a man away from home; he shows no personal interest in Israel. Hosea seems never to have left his northern land; and he loved it intensely. Amos got his inspiration from the stars; Hosea, from the ground. His poetry "clings about his native soil like its trailing vines." God's love-gifts to his people are corn, wool, flax, and oil. Hosea's father must have been a prosperous farmer. As George Adam Smith says, "With Hosea we feel the seasons of the Syrian year: early rain and latter rain, the first flush of the young corn, the scent of the vine blossom, the first ripe fig in season, the beauty of the full olive in the sunshine, the mists and heavy dews of a summer morning in Ephraim, the night wind laden with the air of the mountains." His figures are the figures of farm life: the smoke from the chimney, the chaff on the threshing floor, the silly dove fluttering about, the ploughing, the harrowing, the sowing and reaping, the ox treading out the grain.

To such a man his home would be a chief treasure. But to this sensitive spirit came the most poignant sorrow that can rack the soul. (**Read Hosea 1: 1—3: 5.**) He had married Gomer, the sweetheart of his youth, who became the mother of his son; but she proved unfaithful to him. She left his house and went after her lovers. It was in this tragedy of his home, in the voices of his own broken heart, that he learned how Jehovah had suffered with Israel. Israel had been as unfaithful to Jehovah as Gomer had been to him. The sin of the nation was whoredom—devotion to other gods—but nevertheless Jehovah could not give Israel up. By this divine example, Hosea was led to buy back from her slavery his unfaithful wife and to restore her to her home.

4. *Hosea's Message.* It was this experience of Hosea's that gave him the pattern for his message. As he brooded over his experience, he came to see that Israel's treatment of its God had been like Gomer's treatment of him. Jehovah chose Israel as his bride and brought her to Palestine out of the desert. All that she had she owed to him. But when Jehovah looked for the response of love it was given to other gods. She said, "I will go after my lovers, that gave me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink." She took the gifts of the new land and carried them to the Baalim. (**Read Hosea**



4:1-14.) Her priests had forgotten the law of Jehovah; they did not even maintain an outward respect for him; and the people were like their priests. The kings, too, were unworthy. The kingdom was there, but those who called themselves kings were not the anointed of Jehovah. The land was ignoring God. The new generation of Israel were not Jehovah's spiritual children. What could follow but the divorce of such a faithless nation? Logically that was the next step. Hosea had not been able to see any other end than judgment. His own son he had named "Jezreel," a name of dire omen. After Jezreel, a daughter was born. Hosea called her "Unloved." And after the daughter, another child was born; and Hosea called his name "Not My People." These were omen names. They foretold the end of infidelity. Hosea could not see any other end for Israel than the loss of her land. The loss of her land meant the loss of her God. That was the logic of judgment. But then Jehovah revealed to Hosea that this was not his way. (Read Hosea 11:1-9.) "I am God and not man, the Holy One in the midst of thee. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? My heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together." This is Hosea's message: God is love, and love does not give up a loved one because she has done wrong.

Here Hosea finds his figure inadequate. The bride does not become her husband's possession before her marriage, but there never was a time when Israel was not Jehovah's. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt" (Hos. 11:1). This is a better expression of God's love. It tells of a love, which, because it does not depend on anything in our nature, cannot change. It is the greatest message in prophecy. God, out of love, called the nation to be his. What was at the beginning must continue to the end, for there is no end to the grace of God. Israel may change, but the heart of the divine Lover, never. The "Hound of Heaven" pursues the faithless one until repentance is awakened and the erring is brought home again.

Hence the punishment which the folly of sin brings is not retribution. It vindicates God's law of righteousness, but it is not vengeance. The sinner brings his misery upon himself. The saddest thing about sin, in Hosea's theology, is that it is unworthy of us: "My people perish for lack of knowledge" (Hos.



4:6). They were without feeling, without conscience. Israel had failed to appreciate her God. She had taken the benefits of Jehovah's love and given them to another. Hosea could not understand such lack of understanding (*Hos. 7:11*), such heartless forgetfulness (*Hos. 8:14*), such disloyalty to divine grace (*Hos. 5:3; 8:9*). To him it was senseless stupidity.

But because he saw the root of all Israel's sin to be weakness, Hosea believed it could be removed through repentance. Let the prodigal come to himself and he will return to his Father and say, "Father, I have sinned." What could bring that about? Hosea saw hope for the nation alone in the patience of the divine love; it is the goodness of God that leads to repentance. This hope must be held out, and this Hosea did. (**Read Hosea 14:1-9.**) He was a real and great preacher of repentance. Hence he has been called the "Evangelical Prophet."

We may summarize the message of Hosea in these points: (1) Sin is infidelity (*Hos. 2:5*); (2) Infidelity is folly and ruin (*Hos. 4:6, 7*); (3) Recognition of our condition is the first step of salvation (*Hos. 2:2; 7:10*); (4) God is love (*Hos. 11:9; 14:4, 5*).

### Questions

1. What kind of kings ruled in the Northern Kingdom after Jeroboam II?
2. What were the fortunes of Israel under those kings?
3. How did the Northern Kingdom come to an end?
4. What was the chief cause of its downfall?
5. What lessons for our day may be drawn from the fall of the Northern Kingdom?
6. What points are worth fixing in memory in the history of the Northern Kingdom?
7. What made Hosea a prophet?
8. What is the heart of his message? Under what points may this message be summarized?

### Topics for Further Study

#### *The Failure of the Northern Kingdom*

What were the political, the social, and the spiritual conditions which led to the failure of the Northern Kingdom? Study *II Kings 13-15, 17, Amos, and Hosea*. Consult also *Æsterley and Robinson's A History of Israel, Vol. I*.

*Hosea's Marriage*

Read *Hosea*. Note all references to his family experiences. Consult J. M. P. Smith's *The Prophet and His Problems* and G. A. Smith's *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. I.

*A Comparative Study of Amos and Hosea*

Read *Amos* and *Hosea*. Note the differences in the personal background of the two men, in the content of their prophecies, in the spirit and manner of their proclamations. Consult G. A. Smith's *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. I.

*Permanent Teaching Values in Hosea*

Read the entire prophecy. Note all fundamental truths of abiding significance. After each, jot down one or two modern applications which might be made of it.

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## CHAPTER X

# THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM: ISAIAH AND MICAH

(*I Kings 12-22; II Kings 1-19; II Chronicles 10-36; Isaiah 1-39; Micah*)

### Bible Readings—

*II Chronicles 11:1-12*—The Beginning of the Southern Kingdom

*II Chronicles 19:1-11*—Jehoshaphat's Reforms

*II Chronicles 26:1-23*—Uzziah's (Azariah's) Reign

*Isaiah 6:1-12*—Isaiah's Call

*Isaiah 9:6, 7; 11:1-9; 2:1-5*—Prophetic Messages of Isaiah

*Micah 6:6-8*—The Heart of Micah's Message

When Jeroboam I was made king of Israel at Shechem, only Jerusalem and the barren hills of Judah were left to Rehoboam, the son and successor of Solomon. The division of the monarchy seemed a tragedy. Economically it would have been better if Rehoboam had agreed to let Jeroboam rule the whole land. Judah lay open to invasion by bedouin tribes on the southeast and by Egypt on the southwest. Jeroboam had the support of Egypt, both his mother and his wife being Egyptians. Moreover, the land would have been spared many a bloody conflict if unity could have been preserved. But the course of true religion does not follow economic lines.

Judah had spiritual possessions which Israel lacked, and these were to be conserved by its separation from Israel. It had Jerusalem, now splendid and well fortified, with its Temple and its glorious memories of David and Solomon. "As a matter of fact," says Kittel, "it was the position held by Jerusalem as the capital, and as the city of the Temple, and at the same time as the city which reminded the Israelites of the glorious past, which alone made it possible for David's dynasty, spite of the smallness and weakness of the kingdom, to prolong its existence for centuries." <sup>(1)</sup> Inevitably these traditions had their reaction on the national religion. Judah, in its isolated hills, was in a better position to work out the religious destiny of a people ordained to righteousness. Remote from the corrupting influence of

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<sup>1</sup> R. Kittel, *History of the Hebrews*, Vol. II, p. 246.



Baalism, keeping aloof from international entanglements, and by inheritance leading a simpler life than that which characterized the northern tribes, Judah survived its sister kingdom by 134 years. The Southern Kingdom thus had a history of 352 years. During that period, nineteen kings sat on the throne, all of the house of David. Four periods are marked by the religious moods of the nation—four declines, from all of which except the last there was partial recovery.

1. *First Decline and Revival.* The first king of Judah was Solomon's young son, Rehoboam. He was a weak and petulant king, and under him the people of Judah began to "do evil in the sight of Jehovah." Rehoboam inherited an organized army and early devoted himself to strengthening the defenses of Jerusalem and of the cities south and southwest of it. (**Read II Chronicles 11:1-12.**) In the fifth year of his reign the attack he had anticipated came when the Egyptian Pharaoh Shishak with a large force invaded the land and looted Jerusalem. Judah received a setback from which it did not recover until the reign of Uzziah.

The next king of any consequence was Asa, who, in a long reign of forty-one years, showed a higher conception of religion as well as reforming zeal, driving out the Sodomites and destroying the idols, even degrading the queen mother for her idolatry. Though spiritually superior, politically he made one great blunder: he entered into an alliance with Syria (*I Kgs. 15:18-20*), which was later to plague Judah.

Under Asa's son Jehoshaphat (*II Chr. 18-20*), the reform of this period came to its climax. He continued the program of his father (*I Kgs. 22:43*), "doing that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah." In his reign, the war with Israel was brought to a close (*I Kgs. 22:44*), and Jehoshaphat made an alliance with Ahab. According to *Chronicles*, Jehoshaphat's reform extended the teaching of the Law to the people. (**Read II Chronicles 19:1-11.**) He sent a commission of princes and Levites through the land to make the people better acquainted with their Law, and he organized courts of justice in all the cities, with a court of appeal in Jerusalem.

2. *Second Decline and Revival.* Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab was cemented by the marriage of his son Jehoram to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. But with Jehoram

the second decline in Judah's religion began. Under his son, Ahaziah, the influence of Athaliah, the queen mother, became dominant. When Ahaziah died, Athaliah seized the throne, murdering all her own grandchildren with the exception of Joash, the infant son of Ahaziah, who was concealed by Jehoiada, the high priest (*II Chr.* 22). The priesthood was very powerful in Judah at this time; there was no prophetic party. Jehoiada, the real leader of reform, appealed to the loyalty of the chief officers of the army, and they, holding Athaliah a prisoner in her palace, where she was later put to death, crowned the young prince ruler of the land. For forty years Joash reigned, vacillating between good and evil. As long as Jehoiada lived, the king was devoted to the Temple. Indeed, so highly was the Temple magnified in the eyes of the people that they began to make of it a fetish—a practice which the later prophets roundly condemned. After the death of Jehoiada, Joash is said to have given himself to idolatry. It is even recorded that he executed the priest Zechariah, who had reproved him for this crime (*II Chr.* 24:15-22). Now, too, the Syrian alliance into which Asa had entered became a source of humiliation to Judah, for Joash had to buy off Hazael, the Syrian ruler, from attacking Jerusalem (*II Kgs.* 12:18). Joash was finally slain by his own servants.

The next king of importance was Azariah (called Uzziah in *Isaiah* and *Chronicles*), a younger contemporary of Jeroboam II of Israel. (**Read II Chronicles 26:1-23.**) With Azariah's long reign of fifty-two years, we come to an era of comparative peace—the same as that which the Northern Kingdom enjoyed under Jeroboam II. It was this long era of peace which produced those conditions which brought forth Isaiah and Micah in Judah, as that of Jeroboam II had produced Amos and Hosea. It was a time of general prosperity. The ancient trouble-maker, Edom, was again in subjection, and Judah was able to establish a harbor on the Red Sea (*II Kgs.* 14:7, 22). These successes gave the Southern Kingdom an important commercial position and led to the formation of a merchant marine and to great development of wealth (*Isa.* 2:7, 16). The resources of the kingdom were enlarged and its military strength was increased by the multiplication of chariots and horses (*Isa.* 2:7; *Mic.* 1:13; 5:10). But the same social ills attended the prosperity of



Uzziah's reign as attended that of Jeroboam II in the Northern Kingdom. The centralization of large capital in the hands of a few led to the formation of huge estates, the small holder being either bought out or ejected (*Isa.* 5: 8; *Mic.* 2: 2-9). Judicial corruption increased—every man apparently had his price (*Mic.* 3: 11)—and the poor, in such a state of affairs, could do nothing against tyrants, who, as Micah put it, “stripped the skin from off them and the flesh from off their bones.” Luxury, manifested particularly in the foibles of the women (*Isa.* 3: 16-26), followed in the wake of wealth, making a picture similar to that which Amos painted of the Northern Kingdom.

3. *Isaiah.* It was in the year in which Uzziah died that Isaiah experienced the call which made him a prophet. (Read *Isaiah* 6: 1-12.) He was a member of one of the leading families in Jerusalem and intimately acquainted with the royal court. He was present at the Temple service in memory of the great king whom he loved. There he had a vision, not of Uzziah's greatness, but of Jehovah himself upon the throne, attended by seraphs who chanted, “Holy, Holy, Holy.” The Temple rocked with the divine presence and was filled with smoke. God had come to his dwelling-place, but his people were unfit to receive him. Until then Isaiah had been proud of his land and of its achievements under King Uzziah. He was a thorough nationalist and had believed in the state and the king. Now he saw that his people had been trusting in themselves and not in Jehovah; that moral and religious conditions were about the same in Judah in his day as in Israel in the days of Amos; and that judgment was at hand. He set himself to save his people from the doom to which the Northern Kingdom was already tottering—and he succeeded.

In his call, Isaiah was warned that his task would be a tedious and discouraging one. This he was soon to experience. His first repulse came from Ahaz, the grandson of Uzziah. Ahaz' father, Jotham, had been bidden to come into a league which Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Syria were forming against Assyria (*II Kgs.* 15: 32), but he died before the crisis came. Now Ahaz was being urged to join the league. In his distress, against the advice of Isaiah, he offered himself to Assyria as an ally. To Isaiah this was a flagrant lack of trust in Jehovah. Isaiah knew the weaknesses of Israel and Syria; there was no need to seek



an ally against nations as weak as they. Further, it was vain for Judah to make an alliance with even the most powerful monarch so long as Judah was not in alliance with Jehovah. The ally of today might become a foe tomorrow—as proved to be the case with Assyria. The hope of Judah and of all future nations rested on the men who listened and obeyed. Isaiah took his little boy, who had been given a prophetic name, and went to the king. His message was: “If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established” (*Isa. 7:9*). It is here stated for the first time in history that salvation is a matter of faith. If Judah was to be saved, it could be saved only by faith in Jehovah. Jehovah’s presence in Jerusalem, typified by the waters of Shiloh that go softly, was Judah’s only security. When, therefore, the king refused those waters, the prophet declared that the land would be deluged by the overflowing waters of the Euphrates (*Isa. 8:5-8*); that is, the Assyrians, to whom he was appealing for help, would swallow him up.

It was at this time that Isaiah offered the king a sign from Jehovah, which he refused. The prophet then gave the sign of *Immanuel* (*Isa. 7:14-16*), at once a sign of judgment and of comfort. The sign was given to establish faith in the prophet’s word that Jehovah was about to intervene: (1) Within so brief a time as the infancy of a child born at that time, Damascus and Samaria would fall; (2) Judah’s request for Assyria’s intervention would lead to greater suffering than it was in the power of Israel and Syria to inflict (*Isa. 8:1-10:4*). The king might turn to Assyria and trust in its power, but ultimately salvation would come with the advent of the child whose name was to be “Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (*Isa 9:6*).

Assyria took Damascus, the Syrian capital, in 732 B. C. and Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom, in 722 B. C. From that time forward Judah trembled at every advance of the Assyrian army.

Isaiah opposed the making of an alliance with Assyria, but, when it was made, he maintained that it was a matter of honor to keep it. This he urged upon King Hezekiah when a group of the king’s advisers counseled him to turn against Assyria and to look to Egypt for help. “Woe to the rebellious children, saith Jehovah, that take counsel, but not of me; and that make

a league but not of my spirit; that set out to go down into Egypt, and have not asked of my mouth." (Cf. *Isa.* 30, 31.)

In 711 B. C. the Philistine cities revolted against Assyria and brought Sargon's army into the Shephelah, the hill-country of western Palestine. For three years Isaiah walked the streets of Jerusalem, barefooted and clad in the garb of a captive, as a warning against relying upon Egypt as a source of help.

In 701 B. C. there was a more formidable revolt of Phœnician and Philistine cities, and this time the Assyrians, suspicious of Hezekiah's loyalty, invaded Judah, captured forty-six of its fortified cities, and shut Hezekiah up in Jerusalem "like a bird in a cage." Isaiah, however, now stood out against surrender. When the commander of the Assyrian army sent a peremptory letter to Hezekiah, demanding the surrender of the city, it was Isaiah who indicated the answer: "The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. Whom hast thou defied and blasphemed, and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice and lifted up thine eyes on high? Even the Holy One of Israel. . . . Therefore, thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with a shield, nor cast up a mound against it" (*II Kgs.* 19:21-34). Then the Assyrian army was smitten, and the great Assyrian invader was forced to go back to Nineveh, never to return.

To Isaiah the hope of Judah was its religion. But up to this time Judah's religion seemed to be bound up with the kingdom and the state. It was evident that the king could not be relied on, and that the state was crumbling to pieces from fear. Isaiah came to see, as Hosea had come to see, that true religion can survive the loss of both king and state—nay, in fact, even be better off without them. But Isaiah was at heart a statesman. He had a constructive faith, and he saw the king giving place, in God's plan for his people, to the Messiah. A scion of the house of David was to come who would bear the fourfold name: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Read *Isaiah* 9: 6, 7.) He was to be of a different spirit from the kings that Judah had known, for "the spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge



and of the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearsay of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth . . . and righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins." (Read Isaiah 11: 1-9.) Under his rule, the nations shall learn peace, and Zion shall become the home of the law of peace. (Read Isaiah 2: 1-5.) Isaiah taught his generation—and is teaching us—that it is not stone and mortar in a city wall or in a temple, not the sword of a king nor his treasury, which make a people's defense. Only Immanuel, God-with-us, can save; only in obedience to him is peace.

4. *Micah*. Micah was a younger contemporary of Isaiah, his date being about 724 B. C. Isaiah was a city preacher; Micah was a country preacher. Like Amos, Micah looked on things with the stern eyes of an upland farmer. Unlike Isaiah, who could not give up Jerusalem as the rock on which Jehovah would rebuild his kingdom, Micah saw in the capital only a sink of iniquity. He denounced with fiery earnestness the sins of both Samaria and Jerusalem. That his words were heard beyond the narrow confines of his country home, we learn from Jeremiah (*Jer.* 26: 18, 19), who tells us that the reformation of Hezekiah was due to the preaching of Micah. Micah's great contribution to prophecy was the announcement that the Messiah was to be not a city king but a country prince from the town of Bethlehem (*Mic.* 5: 2, 3), and that national security was to be had in the triangle of justice, mercy, and faith, a combination of the messages of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. (Read Micah 6: 6-8.)

### Questions

1. In what Biblical books do we find the source material for the history of the kingdom of Judah?
2. What did Judah lose and what did it gain by the secession of the northern tribes?
3. How long did Judah survive Israel?
4. Outline the development of this period of Judah's history.
5. Describe Isaiah's call, and state its significance in Isaiah's life.
6. What were the principles underlying Isaiah's political policy?



7. What, according to Isaiah, was Judah's hope?
8. What was Micah's message to the people of Judah?

### Topics for Further Study

#### *What Religion Has to Contribute to the State*

H. R. Hall's *Ancient History of the Near East* throws considerable light on this subject.

#### *Isaiah's Messianic Prophecies*

With the help of a concordance and a Bible dictionary discover the Messianic passages in *Isaiah* 1-39. Study the passages carefully, using a good commentary for additional information. Consult also G. A. Smith's *The Book of Isaiah*.

#### *Micah*

Make a thorough study of *Micah*. A Bible dictionary and a commentary will prove helpful.

#### *Teaching Values in the Call of Isaiah*

Study in detail *Isaiah* 6:1-12. What use could you make of this passage in a talk to young people on the subject of "Life Service"? Make an outline of such an address and indicate in it the modern applications which you would make of Isaiah's experience.

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## CHAPTER XI

### THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM: JEREMIAH AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

(*II Kings* 18-25; *II Chronicles* 33-36; *Jeremiah*, *Nahum*,  
*Habakkuk*, *Zephaniah*, *Ezekiel*)

#### Bible Readings—

*II Kings* 22: 3—23: 25—Josiah's Reforms

*Jeremiah* 31: 31-34—Jeremiah's Prophecy of the New Covenant

*Jeremiah* 33: 1-16—Jeremiah's Prophecy of a Coming Messiah

*Ezekiel* 43: 1-12—Ezekiel's Vision of Jehovah's New Presence

1. *Third Decline and Revival.* Hezekiah's reign, strengthened by Isaiah's counsel, has come down in history as a good reign. It is evident that, although he was not a strong character, he meant to do right, and he deserves a place among the reformers of Judah. He was the first of the Judean kings to take active measures against the high places (pagan shrines); and his reform included the thorough-going removal of images, even of the brazen serpent which commemorated the deliverance in the wilderness (*II Kgs.* 18: 1-6). We might call it the Puritan movement of Judah.

Hezekiah's reforms were not immediately popular. Otherwise we cannot account for the conduct of his own son, Manasseh. He should have shared his father's reforming zeal. But reforms are always unpopular with those whose business they affect, and, with the Assyrian peril past and Isaiah gone, there was a general reaction against the wholesale destruction of high places and the removal of images from the Temple. The priests and other officials of the abolished sanctuaries and the makers of images had seen their living swept away at one blow. The many, also, who favored the joyous worship of the former days of freedom rather than the Puritanic severity of the new movement may have influenced the young king to follow a more popular course. In addition to such considerations, pressure was brought to bear on Manasseh from Nineveh. Sennacherib's successor, Esarhaddon, was a very powerful monarch. He accomplished what his father had only dreamed of, namely, the conquest of

Egypt. He would have little patience with such a petty king as Manasseh, and we read that Manasseh not only paid tribute and furnished soldiers for the Assyrian army but, according to *II Chronicles 33: 11*, was actually carried in chains to Babylon. With such Assyrian overlords as Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, Manasseh simply followed the line of safety in yielding to the Assyrian party in Jerusalem. "I make them [the conquered people] responsible for the sacrifices of the great god Ashur." So wrote the Assyrian king of that time. It throws much light upon Manasseh's restoration of star worship and his defilement of the Temple by the reintroduction of images (*II Kgs. 21: 1-9*). In his long reign of fifty-five years he undid the reforms of all the good kings that had gone before him.

The sudden collapse of the Assyrian Empire a little later, and the finding of the book of the Law in 621 B. C. made it possible for Manasseh's grandson Josiah to inaugurate the most thorough-going reformation Judah had ever known. (**Read *II Kings 22: 3—23: 25*.**) In the eighteenth year of his reign there was handed to Josiah a book of laws which the high priest Hilkiah claimed to have found in the Temple. It proved to be a book of the laws of Moses—more exactly a "Book of the Covenant"—which seems to identify it with *Deuteronomy 12-26*. Both king and people were conscience-stricken; and Josiah summoned them to make a solemn covenant with Jehovah in the terms of the newly discovered code. He destroyed the vessels that were made for Baal; he brought the images out of the Temple and destroyed them; he defiled Topheth, the place where human beings were sacrificed to Molech; and he put away "all them that had familiar spirits and wizards" and all heathen objects left in the city and the country. He destroyed the high places throughout the land and legalized the worship of Jehovah at Jerusalem only. He also commanded that the Passover, which had not been observed since the days of the judges, be celebrated throughout the land.

Josiah's reform was a brave effort to undo the evil done by his grandfather and to restore the spiritual unity of the kingdom. His effort to extend the Passover throughout the land, as well as the new place given to the Law of Moses, showed the highest conception of Israel's mission held by any of its kings. He was undoubtedly inspired by Jeremiah's early prophecies. It seemed as if another day like that of good King Hezekiah was at hand.



Then suddenly, in the year 608 B. C., Necho II of Egypt had a brainstorm in the form of a vision of conquest in the east, and was on the march thither, when Josiah, loyal to Assyria, threw himself in the path of the Egyptian army at Megiddo and was cut down. His dead body was brought to Jerusalem for burial, and the lamentation for him was one long remembered (*II Chr.* 35: 25). The disaster proved irreparable. Josiah had been the inspiration of the reform, and his removal must have made the people feel that Jehovah had forsaken his land (*Ezek.* 8: 12; 11: 9).

2. *Fourth Decline: Jeremiah.* Josiah's death was the beginning of the end. Henceforth, the weakness and corruption of the nation met with no arrest. One clear-headed man at least had foreseen that the people would not remain true to reform; that their sin was incurable (*Jer.* 13: 23); that the nation would perish. That man was Jeremiah. As Amos had come to the Northern Kingdom from the territory of Judah, so Jeremiah came to the Southern Kingdom from the land of Israel. He was of the priests of Anathoth, in the territory of Benjamin. He had been attracted to Jerusalem by Josiah's reformation. That reformation looked toward the reunion of the north and the south. Jeremiah had no confidence in the project to save the state. As a people of God, Judah was as hopeless as Israel had proved. Isaiah's message of faith had fallen on deaf ears. Judah had hitched its wagon to the star of Assyria, and that star was now setting. A new world-ruler, Nebuchadnezzar, was about to sweep over the westland. The untimely death of Josiah in opposing the Pharaoh Necho at Megiddo had put the land at the mercy of Egypt. Necho, after laying a heavy fine upon the country, made Jehoiakim king. In him the spirit of Manasseh lived again. His reign was marked by a series of religious and political errors and crimes which, in less than a quarter of a century, resulted in the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem. Jehoiakim proceeded to Egyptianize the land, as Manasseh had Assyrianized it. Against Jehoiakim and the train of evils brought in by his reign, Jeremiah's voice was unsparing. "Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. . . . For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out

cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. . . . Where are thy gods which thou hast made thee? Let them arise if they can save thee in the time of trouble. . . . Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? Thou shalt be ashamed of Egypt also, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria" (*Jer.* 2:12, 13, 28, 36).

3. *Jeremiah and the Temple.* From the days of Isaiah, the confidence of the people had been in Jerusalem and in the Temple. Jeremiah pierced that confidence with unsparing words: "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that doeth justly, that seeketh truth; and I will pardon her" (*Jer.* 5:1). Similarly Jeremiah denounced those who put their confidence in the Temple, making it a fetish. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the god of Israel, Amend your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your own hurt: then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, from of old even for evermore" (*Jer.* 7:3-7).

4. *Jeremiah the Martyr.* Jeremiah made no impression upon Jehoiakim or his generation. He was imprisoned and would have been put to death but for the intervention of certain elders. He was banished from the Temple and was compelled to live in concealment. In the eyes of the politicians he was guilty of treason and was worthy of death. He suffered the hostility of the Temple officials and of the royal court. But unquestionably the keenest suffering that he endured was his disappointment in his people. He had the feeling of a father whose son seems unable to mend his evil ways. He has been called "the prophet of failure." It was not he who failed, but his people. He has been called "the weeping prophet." He wished that his eyes were fountains of tears that he might weep for the slain of his people (*Jer.* 9:1). He was a man of sorrows. He made his lot



with the perishing nation. He would gladly have died for it, and he wished to die with it.

5. *Jeremiah and the Future of Religion.* Jeremiah was not merely a "weeping prophet." He saw that the nation could not be saved, and that with it would go the Temple and the other institutions of religion; but he also saw that religion was not dependent upon outward institutions. Jehovah would write his covenant upon the individual heart. (**Read Jeremiah 31: 31-34.**) Thus Jeremiah became the prophet of the inner life. It was he who discovered the soul—conscience and personal responsibility, and their significance for religion (cf. *Jer.* 8:7 and 31:29). He saw the resurrection of a spiritual Israel, the restoration of a purged Jerusalem, and the advent of a Messianic King to reign over the redeemed remnant in righteousness. (**Read Jeremiah 33: 1-16.**) In the course of time it came to be seen that, considered from the viewpoint of pure religion, he was the greatest among the prophets (cf. *Mt.* 16:14).

6. *Jeremiah's Contemporaries: Ezekiel.* Three of the Minor Prophets were contemporary with Jeremiah: Zephaniah, the fiery preacher of judgment; Nahum, the doomsman of Nineveh; and Habakkuk, who buries misgivings under faith. But Jeremiah's chief contemporary was Ezekiel. In 597 B. C., Nebuchadnezzar deported King Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, and about 10,000 of the better class of Jews, to Babylon. Among these exiles was Ezekiel. In the fifth year of his exile, 592 B. C., one year after Jeremiah had ceased his public prophecies, Ezekiel began to preach to his fellow exiles. He disillusioned his brethren with regard to an early return to Jerusalem. He saw clearly that Jerusalem must be destroyed. Nothing could stay the divine judgment; the Holy City had proved herself a harlot. From the day of her election by Jehovah, Judah had been unfaithful. The devouring fire would surely consume and the sharp sword of Nebuchadnezzar would be drawn (*Ezek.* 20-23). And so it did come to pass; the besieged city was at length captured, and perished unmourned, like Ezekiel's wife (*Ezek.* 24).

The fall of Jerusalem wrought an awakening change in the people. Prior to that they had been murmuring that they were being punished for the sins of their fathers (*Ezek.* 18). After the fall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel began to unfold God's purpose of restoration and his own plan of reconstruction (*Ezek.* 40-48).



(Read Ezekiel 43: 1-12.) Ezekiel has been called "the father of Judaism." The nation died, but the church was born. After the work of purification had been done, Ezekiel saw that organized religion was needed again—not now as a state-church, but as a church-state. He was the first to see that the church is more enduring than the state, and he tried to center men's affections upon it. He may be called the first Church Father.

7. *The End of the Kingdom.* With the fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B. C., the last vestige of the kingdom came to an end, never to be restored. Judah might have escaped if it had not been for its folly in making a league with Egypt, against the counsel of the prophets from Isaiah on. It was a league of death. "Egypt was the evil genius of the Hebrew people to the close of their history."<sup>1</sup> It is significant that both Isaiah and Jeremiah, though living in different centuries, shared the same distrust of that treacherous neighbor.

When Jerusalem fell, many of the inhabitants of Judah made their way to Egypt and other neighboring lands, Edom, Moab, and Ammon. Edom, in particular, while affording asylum for the Jews, earned their lasting hate by exulting in their humiliation. Nebuchadnezzar appointed a native Jew, Gedaliah, governor of the people who remained in the land. Not a few refugees returned, and it seemed as if a new career was possible for Judah as a province, with Mizpah as the capital. But Judah's day was done; there was no unity among the people. One party slew the governor; another carried Jeremiah to Egypt, where he died.

#### 8. *Points to Be Remembered*

- (1) The Southern Kingdom fell in 586 B. C., and the leading people went into captivity in Babylon for "seventy years."
- (2) The chief prophets of the Southern Kingdom were Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.
- (3) Three foreign foes harassed Judah—the Assyrians under Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, the Egyptians under Shishak and Necho II, and the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, under whom Judah went into captivity.

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<sup>1</sup> G. W. Wade, *Old Testament History*, p. 387.

### Questions

1. Recall the periods into which the history of Judah naturally divides itself.
2. Describe the reign of Manasseh.
3. Describe the reign of Josiah.
4. Who was Jeremiah and what was his message?
5. What prophets were Jeremiah's contemporaries?
6. What was the central idea in Ezekiel's prophecies?
7. By whom and when was the Southern Kingdom overthrown?
8. Name the points in the history of Judah worth fixing in memory.
9. In teaching the history of this period, what lessons could you draw from it for our time?

### Topics for Further Study

#### *Idolatry in the Southern Kingdom*

Consult R. Kittel's *Great Men and Movements in Israel* and Æsterley and Robinson's *A History of Israel*.

#### *A Comparative Study of Jeremiah and Ezekiel*

Make a careful study of these two great prophets. Read large portions of the prophecies of each. With the help of commentaries, Bible dictionaries, and encyclopedias, endeavor to form a picture of the character, life, and work of the two men.

#### *Nahum or Habakkuk or Zephaniah*

Read one of these prophecies. Discover all you can about it from the book itself. Then use any good available reference book to help you complete your understanding of the prophet, his time, and his message.

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## CHAPTER XII

# THE EXILE AND THE RETURN: SECOND ISAIAH

(*II Chronicles 36: 22, 23; Ezra; Nehemiah; Isaiah 40-66; Haggai; Zechariah; Malachi*)

### Bible Readings—

*Psalm 137*—The Spirit of the Exiles in Babylonia

*Isaiah 40: 1-11*—The Second Isaiah's Prophecy of Restoration

*Isaiah 52: 13—53: 12*—The Greatest Messianic Prophecy in the Old Testament

*Ezra 10: 1-17*—Ezra's Reform

*Nehemiah 8: 1-18*—Nehemiah's Crowning Triumph

The people of Judah were now scattered in three parts. The largest part—the country folk whom Nebuchadnezzar had not troubled himself to transport—remained in Palestine. They were neighbors of the Samaritans, the mixed race which sprang up of the intermarriage of the remnant of the Ten Tribes with the colonists introduced into the country by the Assyrian monarchs. A second section—a very considerable number—had taken refuge in Egypt and other near-by countries. Those who went to Egypt formed there the nucleus of the colony which later produced the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. The third and smallest, though the most select, group was settled in Babylon. "Practically all the wealth and culture, the brains and skill of the Jewish race were there, and on that soil grew those ideals which were destined to control the Jewish world down to our day."

1. *The Exile.* Of the condition of the Jews in Babylon little explicit information has come down to us. One thing is reflected in their literature: their sense of "the strange land" into which they had come. They had passed from the hills to the plain. Hitherto their life had been interwoven with their mountains; the new land was so foreign, they could not sing the songs of their homeland in it. (**Read Psalm 137.**)

Exile did not mean imprisonment. Nebuchadnezzar put the Hebrews to work. He was a great builder, and labor was always in demand. The first of the exiles—those deported in 598 B. C.



—seem to have enjoyed considerable independence. From Jeremiah's letter to the captives (*Jer.* 29) we learn that they were free to build houses, plant gardens, and thus set up homes. Their condition has been compared to that of the better class of Siberian exiles in the day of the czars. They had their community life. They assembled for counsel at their prophet Ezekiel's home. The lot of the second deportation (586 B. C.) was harder. Many of them were put to forced labor and domestic service. "In short, the state of the Jews in Babylonia," says G. A. Smith, "resembled what seems to have been their fortune wherever they have settled in a foreign land—part of them forced to labor, or overtaxed; part left alone to cultivate literature or to gather wealth . . .; some treated with rigor . . ., but some, also, by the versatile genius of their race, advancing to a high place."<sup>(1)</sup>

The Exile did three things for the Jews: (1) *It made them commercials.* In Palestine they had not been a commercial people. Babylon was the center of the world's trade. It was inevitable that here they should form habits for which they have since become known throughout the world. (2) *It cured them of idolatry.* Nothing is more striking than the differences in attitude of the Jews of Manasseh's or Jehoiakim's day and of those who returned from Babylon, in the matter of idol worship. Babylon had shown them idolatry in its full fruitage; idolatry was but the logical expression of polytheism. In Babylon, Jehovah's people learned anew that their God was one, and that he was a God of righteousness. After the Exile no prophet speaks of idolatry. (3) *It turned them from ritual to writing.* The loss of their Temple, the leisure of their priests and scribes, and the example of the Babylonians themselves set the Jews to codifying their Law, to collecting and editing their hymns, and to writing out the record of their past history with the lessons of it which they now understood. There was a new appreciation of the Law of Moses and of the fundamental institutions of their religion, such as circumcision and the Sabbath. The observance of the Sabbath became the badge of their relation to Jehovah, and the synagogue became their rallying-point.

The career of Neo-Babylonia (the later Babylonian kingdom)

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<sup>1</sup> G. A. Smith, *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. II, p. 49.

was a brief one. After Nebuchadnezzar, there was no strong ruler; and in 538 B. C. great Babylon fell before Cyrus the Persian. Cyrus, as he advanced upon Babylon, was hailed as "Jehovah's anointed" (*Isa. 45:1*), and in 536 B. C. he fulfilled the hopes entertained of him, by giving permission to all Jews to return to Jerusalem and there to restore their Temple.

2. *The Return.* In the renaissance which marked the captivity there was a new appreciation of the prophet Isaiah so that the unnamed prophet who wrote chapters 40-66 of the book *Isaiah* took the name of or became known as the "Second Isaiah." There is no mistaking the Babylonian setting of these twenty-seven chapters—or at least the first sixteen of them. In these chapters, the people are captive in another than their own land (*Isa. 43:4-6*); Jerusalem is destroyed and the cities of Judah are without inhabitants (*Isa. 44:26*); the dominant world power is not Assyria but Babylon, and Babylon is doomed (*Isa. 46:1, 2; 47*); the proud oppressor is about to be humbled; a new world-conqueror has appeared on the scene; "Thus saith Jehovah to . . . Cyrus" (*Isa. 45:1*); Cyrus is about to take Babylon, and the Jewish exiles are about to be delivered. The dominant note of this prophet's message is consolation.

Three outstanding assurances shine forth from these chapters: (1) Jehovah has not forgotten his people but has prepared for them the way for their return. (**Read Isaiah 40:1-11.**) Of this Jehovah assured them by his omnipotence and righteousness, and by an appeal to history (*Isa. 40:12—41:5; 41:10, 11*). (2) Jehovah's agent in this return is Cyrus. But there is a service to be rendered to the nations which Cyrus cannot perform. For that service Israel (note the use of the old national name) is called. Israel is to be the servant of Jehovah. Then, as the prophet sees that the nation will fail in this mission, the personal Servant, who seals his testimony with his martyrdom, looms up; and the prophet sees that by vicarious suffering the Servant becomes Jehovah's Deliverer and is exalted (*Isa. 49-55*). The prophecy concerning the Servant of Jehovah in *Isaiah 53* is the greatest Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament. (**Read Isaiah 52:13—53:12.**) (3) Mere return to the land would not save Israel. In *Isaiah 56-66*, we are back in Jerusalem, but with unrestored walls and unregenerate life. The nation must be born again. Redemption is an achievement in time. The wheat



must be separated from the chaff, and the future blessedness of the faithful must be achieved by the doom of the apostates. This is the way of the kingdom of God.

There were three expeditions of returning exiles:

*The First Expedition* (536 B. C.). A short time after his accession to power, Cyrus issued a decree from Ecbatana, his capital, commanding that the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Jews should be returned, that the Temple should be rebuilt at the expense of the national treasury, and that those Jews who so desired should return to the land of their fathers. At the same time he appointed Sheshbazzar, a Jew (probably the same as Shenazar, *I Chr.* 3:18, the grandson of Jehoiakim and the uncle of Zerubbabel), governor of the subprovince (*Ezra* 1). Of the further history of Sheshbazzar we know nothing. Later we read of Zerubbabel, a Jewish prince, the grandson of Jeconiah, being installed as governor, and, at his side, we find Joshua, consecrated to be high priest.

As to how many Jews returned with this expedition, scholars differ. Kittel thinks that the lists are reliable and that there were about 40,000 men and over 7,000 slaves. Other scholars think that such a large number could not have made the journey, or that they would have made more of an impression on Jerusalem. At all events, those who returned faced great discouragement and a good deal of opposition. The Jews in the land had learned to get along without a temple and were more interested in their personal fortunes than in temple-building. It was the arrival of Zerubbabel and Joshua that gave new life to the project and called forth the prophetic work of Haggai and Zechariah. "Those prophets," says Kittel, "spoke the everyday language of crop failure and hard times, and they believed that conditions would improve when the Temple was rebuilt." Haggai saw in Zerubbabel the marks of the Messiah (*Hag.* 2:20-23). Might it not be that the Messiah was then coming to restore his kingdom? Under such exciting impressions the corner-stone of the Temple was laid in December, 520 B. C. In February, 519, Zechariah, too, hailed Zerubbabel as the Messiah and by the generous gifts of wealthy Jews in Babylon had a crown made for him. With eager expectations the people awaited the news of the fall of the Persian, Darius, but Darius suppressed all rebellions, and in 519 he became master of the Persian



Empire, ruling until 486. Thus it was that the Jewish dream of a world Messiah collapsed. What became of Zerubbabel is not known. The Persian government may have put him out of the way.

The Temple was dedicated in 516 B. C. The work, however, had not advanced without interruption. The Samaritans had asked for a share in the work. When the Jews refused it, a bitter feud arose, and the Samaritans did all in their power to hinder the work, even sending false reports to Darius, who, however, loyally supported the Jews. The Temple itself was a disappointment. Those who remembered the glory of Solomon's temple wept.<sup>(2)</sup> However, its construction was an event of great significance for the Jewish religion. Once more that religion had a sanctuary which perpetuated the traditions of five hundred years and became the center of instruction for the future.

From this point, for more than fifty years, the history of the Jewish community in Palestine is uncertain. The book of *Malachi* and the supplement to *Isaiah* (*Isa.* 56-66) probably belong to this period. They suggest that conditions grew steadily worse. In spite of the Temple, the community did not flourish. Their burdens were heavy. Heavy indebtedness, failure of crops, plagues of locusts—such burdens as these weighed down their spirits and sapped their courage. Gambling, adultery, perjury, and oppression began to mark their conduct (*Mal.* 3:5). Foreign marriages were indulged in, Jewish wives sometimes being divorced that foreign wives might be taken (*Mal.* 2:10-16). The Temple services were neglected, and the priests were left without their dues. The colony seemed about to collapse.

*The Second Expedition* (458 B. C.). It is not improbable that the colony would have failed completely if it had not been for Ezra and Nehemiah. The former was a learned scribe and priest, who longed to see Jerusalem become once more the center of a knowledge of the Law. To that end he obtained from Artaxerxes a letter allowing him to take to Judea as many as of their own will would accompany him, and giving him power to enforce under penalties the maintenance of the Law. A body of men to the number of 1496 responded, to which were added later 220

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<sup>2</sup> The Mishna declares that there were five things which the second Temple lacked: the sacred fire, the Shekinah, the Holy Spirit, and the Urim and Thummim.

Nethinim (temple servants). The expedition was not without its perils (*Ezra* 8: 22, 31), but in due time it arrived, and Ezra threw himself into the work of reform. (Read *Ezra* 10: 1-17.) The forbidding of foreign marriages precipitated a bitter controversy. It was the first conflict in history of the ideas of church and state. To Ezra the state was the church, an institution for the welfare of humanity which must govern its people with absolute authority. He believed the state to be a moral institution. His position, however, was bitterly contested by many of the leaders. Ezra, as well as Ezekiel, has been called the father of Judaism.

*The Third Expedition* (445 B. C.). Thirteen years after Ezra arrived in Jerusalem, Nehemiah, one of Artaxerxes' cupbearers, a layman who sympathized with Ezra's conviction, secured permission to go to Jerusalem to build up the city physically, as Ezra was striving to build it up spiritually and morally. The king not only gave him permission to make the expedition, but seems to have appointed him governor. On his arrival Nehemiah made a survey of the walls of the city by night and determined that the first need of the desolate hill was adequate protection. The walls of an ancient city were its strength. The Jews on the spot showed little enthusiasm for Nehemiah's project. They were poor, dispirited, divided among themselves. The Samaritans to the north were hostile, as were the neighbors on the east and the south. "Nehemiah," says W. J. Lofthouse, "is one of the most striking and capable characters in the Old Testament . . . , equal to every emergency. Determined yet shrewd, self-controlled yet with a dash of Oriental passion, pious and warmhearted but uniformly cautious, he was a sort of Jewish Cromwell, ready to regard his greatest success as a crowning mercy, but careful to keep his powder dry. Unwilling or unable to presume upon his official authority, he won over the poor by generosity and sympathy, the rich by appeals to their public unselfishness; he organized his building operations by family connections; he outwitted his enemies in what we are tempted to call their own game of bluff."<sup>3</sup> Nehemiah succeeded. He organized the old state into a church state, almost in spite of its adherents. He put spirit into the dry bones of legalism. Perhaps his crowning triumph was in interesting his people in their

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<sup>3</sup> *Clarendon Bible*, Vol. IV, p. 28.



priceless Scriptures. He organized the first Bible school in history. (Read Nehemiah 8:1-18.) From his day the Jews had their Scriptures almost as we have inherited them. These proved to be the real walls of the spiritual Jerusalem. What Ezekiel had dreamed was now an accomplished fact.

3. *The Interval between the Old Testament and the New.* There is an historical chasm of several centuries between the Old Testament and the New. During this time there was neither prophet nor inspired writer among the Jews. Our knowledge of this period is derived chiefly from Josephus, a distinguished Jew of Jerusalem, born A. D. 37. The land of Palestine during these centuries was under the dominion of the following:

- (1) It was under the rule of the *Persians* to the year 333 B. C.
- (2) It was under the rule of *Alexander the Great* for the next ten years.
- (3) It was under the rule of the *Ptolemies* of Egypt until 204 B. C.
- (4) It then came under the rule of *Syria* until it was set free by the Maccabees, 163 B. C.
- (5) It was taken by the *Romans* under Pompey in 63 B. C. and was made tributary to the great mistress of the world.

### Questions

1. Where were the people of Judah after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C.?
2. What was the condition of the Jews in Babylon?
3. What did the Babylonian exile do for the Jews?
4. What was the chief message of the prophecies of the Second Isaiah?
5. What was Cyrus' attitude towards exiles like the Jews?
6. Describe the first expedition to Jerusalem and the results.
7. Describe the second expedition and the efforts of Ezra.
8. Describe the third expedition and the work of Nehemiah.
9. Under what powers was Jerusalem, subsequent to Persian rule?
10. In each of the following, what do you consider the outstanding teaching value for modern life?
  - (1) The Exile
  - (2) The Second Isaiah



- (3) Cyrus
- (4) The New Temple
- (5) Ezra
- (6) Nehemiah

### Topics for Further Study

#### *The Servant of Jehovah*

With the help of a concordance discover the prophecies concerning the Servant of Jehovah found in *Isaiah* 40-66. Study these passages using a good Bible commentary. Consult also G. A. Smith's *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. II.

#### *Jewish Legalism: Its Rise and Strength*

Study *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*. Consult R. Kittel's *Great Men and Movements in Israel*.

#### *Haggai or Zechariah or Malachi*

Read one of these prophecies. Discover all you can about it from the book itself. Then use any good available reference book to help you complete your understanding of the prophet, his time, and his message.

#### *The Fulfillment of Prophecy*

Read Chapter XXIV of this volume.

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## **PART II**

### **Israel: According to Her Civilization and Institutions**





## CHAPTER XIII

# THE ANCIENT WORLD: EGYPT

### Bible Readings—

*Genesis* 12: 10—13: 2—Abraham in Egypt

*Genesis* 39: 1—41: 57—Joseph's Rise in Egypt

*Exodus* 1: 7-14—The Israelites in Egypt

*I Kings* 14: 25-28—Palestine Invaded by Egypt

*II Kings* 23: 29-35—Egyptian Power in Judah

The Bible is a book which grew out of life. It is a book which reflects great experiences. While in relation to human history as a whole it covers a relatively brief span of time and is limited to a narrow stage of geography, it has had wide contacts. Great civilizations lie back of its history. It must be remembered that the world was old and civilization well advanced when the Bible was written. The idea that in the Bible we have a comprehensive history of the world has long since been given up. In the Bible we have a compendium of man's development *from a religious viewpoint*. The Bible writers were only incidentally interested in any other phase of man's development.

Our present knowledge of the earth's surface enables us to read the story of man's development in civilization apart from his spiritual interests. We can distinguish, from the examples of his handiwork still surviving, several successive stages of that development. There is the early stone age, in which man used unfashioned stone implements. There is the later stone age, in which he had learned to fashion and mount his tools. In both of these he was a hunter for food and a nomad with no fixed habitation, taking shelter in the dense primeval forest.

It was the descending glaciers that drove man out of the forest into the caves of the earth, which were his next home. His crude "fist-hatchet" was superseded by flint tools and weapons. The skeletons of cave-dwelling men which have survived show a body scarcely five feet in height, of stooping posture and head thrust forward. In the next stage of his development primitive man lived in a habitat of his own making. The bow was his chief weapon, and he wandered far afield in his chase for food.

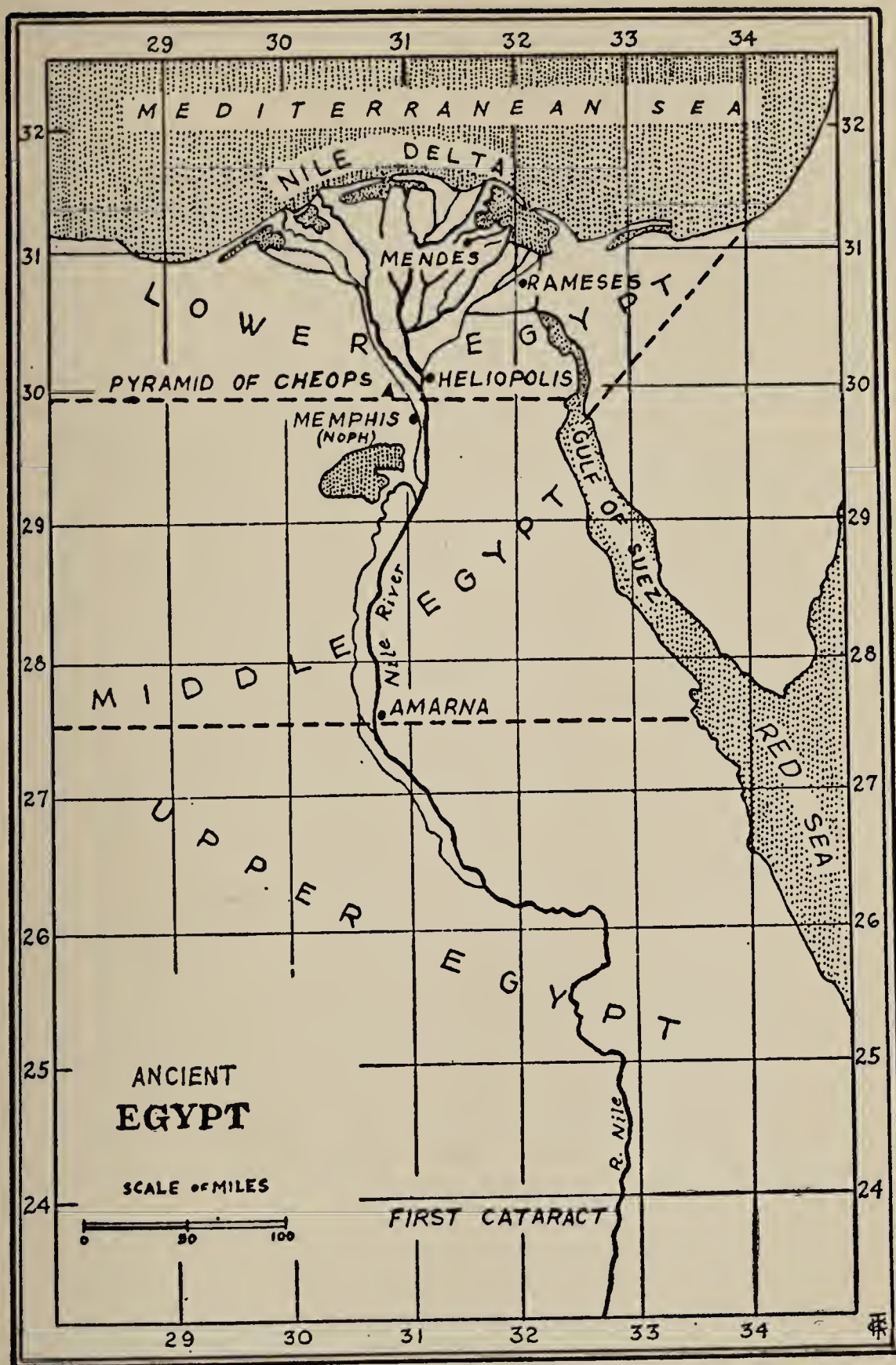
Climate had much to do with the early development of civiliza-

tion—climate and grass. The balmy river valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates were the homes of man's earliest civilizations. While the prehistoric men of glacial Europe and upper Asia were waging their hard battle with the cold and the ice, their contemporaries in northern and central Africa and in southern Asia were emerging into the warm and fertile lands which lived in the memory of men as their Edenic home.

1. *Egypt*. Ancient Egypt lay like a green ribbon thrown north and south across the burning sands of the African deserts. The rich fertility of this narrow strip of land was the product of the generous Nile, which, periodically overflowing its banks, deposited layers of cultivable soil. And in the north this thousand-mile-long stream built up a fan-shaped Delta, which became in time the home of a numerous people. Egypt is a narrow country, not more than thirty-two miles wide at the place of its greatest breadth. But what it has lost in width, it has gained in length; from the first cataract to the Delta is about 550 miles. It was in this stretch of verdant territory that man's first great civilization had its beginnings. (Study the map.)

The prehistoric inhabitants of Africa in their quest for food early discovered this fertile and sheltered valley. Here they made the transition from the life of the hunt to that of cattle breeding and agriculture. Here they also developed the first system of irrigation in the world. These Nile men buried their dead, and with the skeletons are found stone tools with which they worked, and jars of the barley and wheat they cultivated. The wild ancestors of these grains have been discovered in Palestine and in the Zagros mountains. It seems, therefore, that the nomads from Africa's central plateau were joined by nomads from the east who brought with them their cereals and their domestic animals, and that the fusion of these two peoples produced the Egyptians of history. Here, in the most salubrious climate in the world, this new race created the earliest civilization of which there is any historical record. They built villages of low, mud-brick huts. In each village there was a headman, or chief, who controlled the irrigation ditches of the district, and to whom the peasants brought, as tribute, a share of the grain they raised. "Such transactions," says Breasted, "led to scratching a rude picture of the basket grain-measure and a number of strokes on the mud wall of the peasant's hut, indicat-





ing the number of measures of grain he had paid. The use of these purely pictorial signs formed the earliest stage in the progress of learning to write."<sup>1</sup>) Egypt, Breasted reminds us, was thus probably the first to give to the world both agriculture and writing. It also gave us the year of 365 days (the introduction of which in 4241 B. C. is the earliest dated event in history), the smelting of metals, and stone architecture. More than two thousand years before Moses led the children of Israel to Sinai, Egyptians who had wandered thither, by some chance contact of their charcoal embers with native ore, released the metal and discovered smelting. Thus metal tools were made possible, and with metal tools, a thousand years later, Imhotep found that he could cut square blocks of limestone and with these line the chambers of tombs. This was the beginning of stone architecture.

2. *The Beginning of Egyptian History.* The name by which Egypt is referred to in the Old Testament is Mizraim, which means "the two boundaries," referring to the two divisions of the land: Upper (southern) Egypt and Lower (northern) Egypt. The modern name "Egypt" is from the district which the Greeks called *Kaptites*, from which we also have "Copt," the name by which an Egyptian Christian is known today. There were 42 such districts—the 20 of the Delta later forming the kingdom of Lower Egypt, and the 22 along the Nile the kingdom of Upper Egypt. The date at which these districts were united is so far back as to be a matter only of conjecture.

Some time during the fourth millenium B. C. a strong man, Menes by name, arose in Upper Egypt and succeeded in uniting the two kingdoms. For 420 years his dynasty and its successor ruled the united realm. It was during this period that picture writing was developed, buildings of brick were constructed, and the Egyptians began to work the turquoise mines of Sinai. The remarkable development of those four centuries led to the splendor and power of the Old Kingdom, which centered in Memphis (called "Noph" in the Old Testament). It was in this period that the pyramids were built. Imhotep's terraced structure for the king's tomb dates from 3000 B. C., and, about a century later, the massive Great Pyramid of Cheops (Khufu) was erected. It was one of the Seven Wonders of the World,

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<sup>1</sup> J. H. Breasted, *The Conquest of Civilization*, 1926, p. 48.



a solid mass of masonry containing about 2,300,000 blocks of limestone, each weighing on an average two and a half tons. The sides of this pyramid at the base are 755 feet long, and its height is 450 (originally, 482) feet. The stone was quarried from the hill on the opposite side of the Nile, twelve miles away. It was of this pyramid that Napoleon said, "Forty centuries are looking down upon us." It was hoary with age when Abraham went down into Egypt (**Read Genesis 12: 10—13: 2**) and when Joseph was made food-administrator of the land. (**Read Genesis 39: 1—41: 57.**) The sphinx, near by, is another of the ancient world-wonders. It is a colossal lion, the face of which is the likeness of King Kafre, carved out of a boulder of red sandstone, 172 feet long, with forelegs extending 50 feet from the body. The king of the Egyptians was called "Per-o" ("Great House"), or "Pharaoh." The chief administrative bonds which held the nation together were the collection of taxes and the supervision of enforced labor. The whole government centered in Memphis, which at first was called "The White Wall," from the extent of the administrative buildings.

3. *The Middle Kingdom.* Over-centralization always begets revolt, and the feudal lords of Upper Egypt reduced the land to a number of independent little kingdoms. For 250 years that condition continued. Then a powerful line of kings arose at Thebes, and soon there was a kingdom there strong enough to dominate the land and to conduct foreign trade with Syria and Palestine. There is a picture of that time in the tomb of a nobleman, showing some of those who came to trade with him. (When the picture was first discovered it was thought that the figures were the sons of Jacob, come to buy grain in Egypt.) During that period, civilization reached a high level. A social conscience developed, reflected in *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage* and other writings of the period, which resemble the book *Proverbs* and may have been known in Palestine.

4. *The Empire.* A second period of disintegration followed when the Asiatic Hyksos, the so-called "Shepherd Kings," conquered Egypt and imposed upon her two dynasties of rulers. These Asiatics were in power about a hundred years, but were finally driven out about 1580 B. C. It was probably in this period of Hyksos rule that the Israelites settled in Egypt. The Hyksos were driven out by Ahmose I, the founder of the XVIII



dynasty. He, further, exterminated the landed nobles and restored their lands to the crown. Thus a new period in Egyptian history was begun—the period of the Empire. Egypt now became aggressive, and under the brilliant Thothmes III, “the Napoleon of the Nile,” all Syria-Palestine came under its sway. There is a picture of slave labor dating from this reign with an inscription: “The taskmaster says to his laborers, The stick is in my hand, be not idle.” Had the oppression of the Hebrews begun already? Some scholars think that Thothmes was the Pharaoh of the oppression.

Amenophis IV, of the same dynasty, made the first attempt in history to establish a monotheistic religion. Removing his capital to Amarna, about seventy miles south of modern Cairo, he here gave himself up to the cultivation of the worship of the sun-disk, Aten, as the only god. He even changed his own name from Amenophis to Khuenaten.

The empire continued under the XIX dynasty. The outstanding reign of that dynasty was that of Ramses II, who was the Pharaoh for sixty-seven years. Many scholars take him to be the Pharaoh of the Hebrew oppression. (**Read Exodus 1: 7-14.**) Ramses was an indefatigable builder. The great Hall of Karnak was completed in his reign, and buildings were erected in other parts of the land and even in Palestine. Dr. Naville showed that it was Ramses who built, or rebuilt, Pithom, while the other city mentioned in *Exodus 1: 11* bears his name. If Ramses II was the Pharaoh of the oppression, Merneptah was the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

5. *Egypt's Decline.* With the passing of the XIX dynasty, Egypt steadily declined, and, after the XX dynasty, was under a succession of foreign rulers. Ethiopia, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome, in succession were her overlords. It was at the beginning of this long period of weakness that David built up his kingdom. First the Libyans overran Egypt and became so powerful that, in 945 B. C., one of them, Sheshonk—the Shishak of the Old Testament, who invaded Palestine in the reign of Rehoboam (**Read I Kings 14: 25-28**)—founded the XXIII dynasty. One of its kings, Osorkon II, was apparently an ally of Ahab. From the days of Jeroboam I, Egypt was the ally of the Northern Kingdom. Then the Nubians gained control and set up a dynasty. It was Tirhakah, of this dynasty,

who sought to aid Hezekiah against Sennacherib (*II Kgs. 19: 9*). Then the Assyrians, under Esarhaddon, invaded Egypt, defeated Tirhakah, and made Lower Egypt an Assyrian province, while Ashurbanipal captured Thebes (No) and plundered it (cf. *Nah. 3: 8*).

There was a revival of the old Egyptian spirit under the XXVI dynasty (663-525 B. C.), founded by Psamtik I. When the Assyrian Empire began to crumble, Nechoh, the son and successor of Psamtik, had a vision of recovering Egypt's position as a world power and led an army northward, probably to aid Assyria against Babylonia. Josiah, king of Judah, who sought to thwart him, was defeated in battle at Megiddo, and Nechoh passed on to the Euphrates. (**Read *II Kings 23: 29-35*.**) His dreams, however, were soon shattered by Nebuchadnezzar, and Babylonia became the mistress of the eastern world. Hophra, the last king of this dynasty, persuaded King Zedekiah to rebel against Babylonia, and thus he lured Judah to its destruction.

With the fall of Babylon in 538 B. C. came the Persians. Cambyses conquered Egypt in 525 B. C., and the mistress of the Nile sank for the last time as an independent power. When Alexander the Great wrested Egypt from the Persians in 332 B. C., he built the great city which bears his name. For eleven years Egypt formed a part of Alexander's empire, and, when it broke up, Egypt fell to his general, Ptolemy Lagus, whose name was given to the dynasty which ruled for three hundred years. Under the Ptolemies, Egypt became very wealthy, and Alexandria became the second seat of Greek culture in the world. Here the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek; this translation is known as the Septuagint. About 30 B. C. Egypt came under the power of Rome. It was during this period that the Jewish colony of Alexandria, numbering now over half a million, became famous, and Philo, a contemporary of Jesus, sought to combine Greek and Hebrew thought in a philosophy which had an influence on early Christian writings.

6. *The Religion of the Egyptians.* The Egyptians were a very religious people, but only once did they approach the idea of one God. They saw a god in every natural phenomenon which was incomprehensible to them. Their world was peopled with gods because it was full of mystery and wonder. Many of their names for deities are the names of the things which excited



their wonder. The sky (*nut*) became the goddess Nut; the earth (*geb*) became the goddess Geb; the sun was the god Ra or Amen; and the Nile was the god Hapi. More often the deities were identified with animals. Certain animals suggested certain traits: the lion suggested power; the bull, strength; the ibis, wisdom; the cat, maternity. These qualities became deities.

Originally every settlement had at least one local spirit. Thus there were many gods. No Egyptian ever knew all the gods of his land. Each district, or nome, had its god, and if a district was overcome by another, its god was superseded by the god of the conquering district. These nome-gods were usually in the form of animals—the Apis (bull) of Memphis, the Seker (hawk) of Mendes, the Phoenix of Heliopolis, the Hathor (cow) of Denderah, the Thoth (ibis) of Hermopolis, the Horus (hawk) of Edfu, etc.

The Egyptians never became abstract thinkers. They always felt the need of expressing themselves in concrete terms. Their language was pictorial. Thus truth was pictured by a feather; writing, by an inkwell and a pen; walking, by a pair of legs. Their theology was a picture gallery. They expressed the personality of their gods by giving them a human body with the distinctive animal head.

The Egyptians' gods, therefore, were taken from the realm of their experience. Osiris, the best known figure of their pantheon, was of human origin; he was a king who had been overthrown by a rival of a lower order. Osiris' worship was restored by Isis, his sister and wife, and he became the god of the revived life of spring. Ra was the great sun-god of Lower Egypt, who later became associated with Amen, the local sun-god of Upper Egypt. Out of reflection upon life sprang such gods as Pthah, the creator; Min, the male principle; Hathor, the female principle; Maat, the goddess of truth; and many others.

The Egyptians had a conception of man not unlike that of the Hebrews. Besides a body (*khat*) and a soul (*ba*), every man had a spiritual double (*ka* or *khu*) which at death began a new and independent existence, resembling his existence here and requiring food for its sustenance. This *ka* became the center of the cult of the dead. It was pictured on a man's tomb. There is a very famous piece of papyrus representing the deceased, a man by the name of An and his wife. Before them is a pair of



scales being adjusted by a jackal-headed deity, while an ibis-headed god stands behind, ready to record the verdict. The man's heart (symbolized by a tiny jar) is being weighed against truth (symbolized by a feather), while a monster in the rear stands ready to spring out and devour him if the test goes against him. Such papyrus rolls, known as "the Book of the Dead," were sometimes ninety feet in length and completely filled with the charms with which the *ka* was to be protected in the next world.

The Egyptians had a high moral sense and extolled what we call the moral virtues. Many of their sayings closely resemble the proverbs of Solomon. They also had prophets. *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage* lays bare the terrible wickedness of the writer's day; but the only counsel that the prophet had to offer was the appeasement of the gods by ritualistic acts. Repentance and faith, which the Hebrew prophets prescribed, were unknown in the Egyptian religion. The Egyptians attained culture, but they never attained the ethical religion of their despised Hebrew slaves.

### Questions

1. What is the relation of the Bible to human history?
2. Where and how did civilization begin?
3. Where is Egypt? Describe it.
4. What beginnings of civilization arose in Egypt?
5. Outline briefly the history of Egypt.
6. Mention four or five points at which Hebrew history touched Egyptian history.
7. Describe Egyptian religion.
8. Can you discover three characteristics of Hebrew religion which differentiate it from Egyptian religion? Mention them.
9. How will this study help you to teach more effectively lessons on the beginnings of Hebrew history and of Hebrew religion?

### Topics for Further Study

#### *The Land of Egypt*

Study a good map of ancient Egypt. Locate the more important features and places of Egypt: the Nile, the Delta, Memphis, Thebes, Amarna, Goshen, Pithom, Ramses, Alexandria. Read up on the geography of Egypt in a Bible dictionary.

*Egyptian Religion*

For a more thorough study of Egyptian religion read W. M. F. Petrie's *The Religion of Ancient Egypt* or Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. V.

*The Influence of Egypt on the Religion of Israel*

J. M. P. Smith's *The Prophet and His Problems*, Chap. I, and W. O. E. Oesterley's *Book of Proverbs* will prove helpful.

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## CHAPTER XIV

# THE ANCIENT WORLD: BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA

### Bible Readings—

*Genesis 11: 1-9*—The Tower Temple of Babel

*II Kings 16: 5-9*—Assyria's Conquest of Syria

*II Kings 17: 1-6*—Assyria's Defeat of Israel

*Genesis 1: 1-31*—The Hebrew Story of Creation

The second home of civilization was the Mesopotamian valley. Here, instead of a "green ribbon," we have "the Fertile Crescent." (Study carefully the map on page 118.)

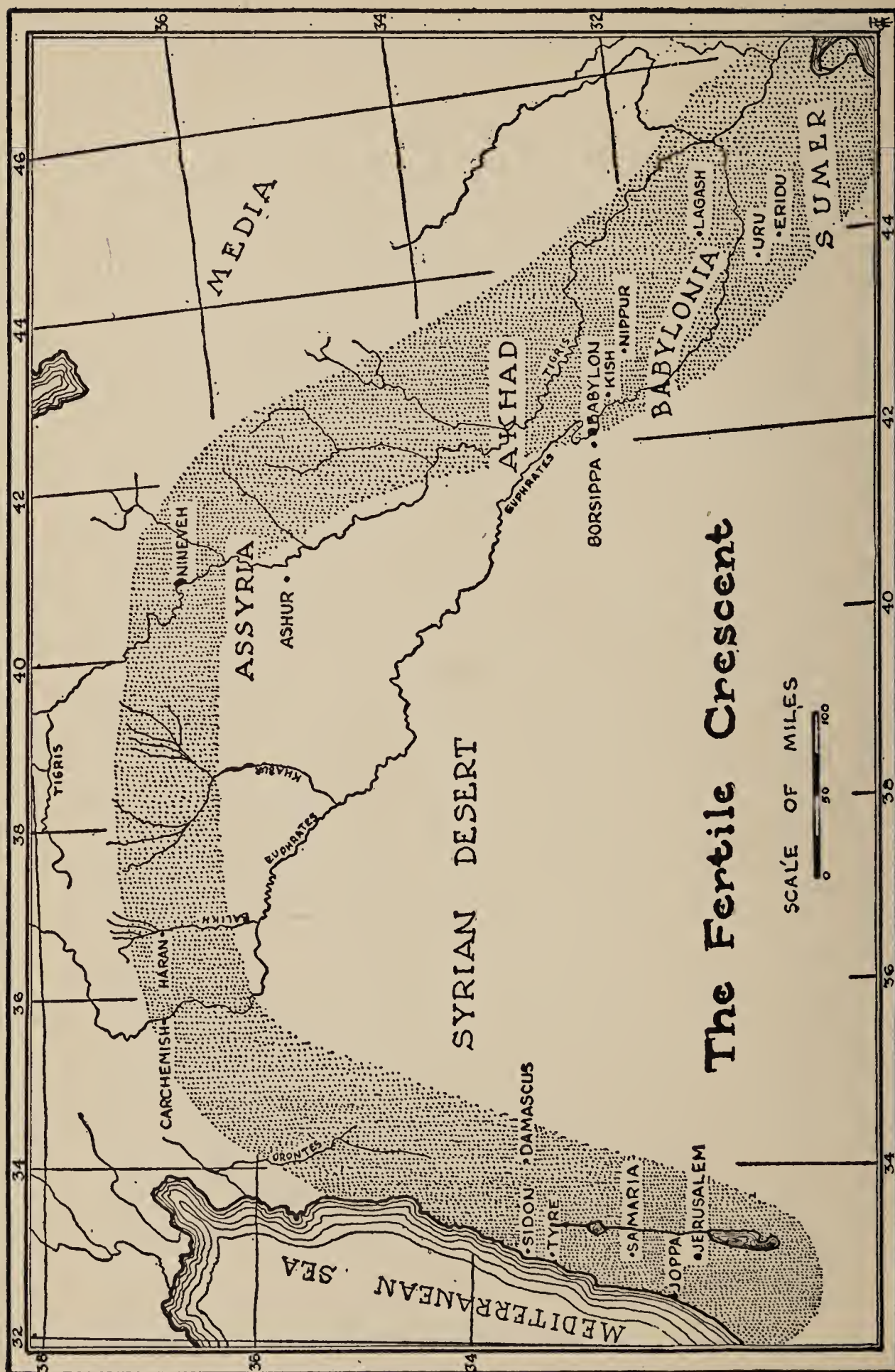
The Fertile Crescent is the borderland, "a kind of cultivable fringe," between the mountains on one side and the desert on the other. "This Fertile Crescent," says Professor Breasted, who gave it its name, "is approximately a semi-circle, with the open side toward the south, having the west end at the southeast corner of the Mediterranean, the center directly north of Arabia, and the east end at the north side of the Persian Gulf. It lies like an army facing south, with one wing stretching along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean and the other reaching out to the Persian Gulf, while the center has its back against the northern mountains. The end of the western wing is Palestine; Assyria makes up a large part of the center; while the end of the eastern wing is Babylonia."<sup>1</sup> This stretch of fertile land has also been called a desert bay. It is the harbor into which have poured various currents of migration. It became one of the earliest of human settlements and the home of the second great civilization of the ancient world.

Nature was more tardy in providing the Fertile Crescent as a home for the primitive nomads than in opening the Nile valley. The Fertile Crescent was in the path of the glacial drift, and at the end of the ice age there was a much more extensive water surface than now. The Black and the Caspian Seas and the Persian Gulf are the remains of the subsidence which freed the land for human habitation. This was the original home of the Semites—a people of the white race, made up of many inde-

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<sup>1</sup> J. H. Breasted, *The Conquest of Civilization*, p. 117.





pendent tribes. As these tribes secured a footing there, they slowly made the transition from the wandering life of the desert to the settled life of the agricultural peasant. At times this slow shift swelled into a great tidal wave of migration—a human tide from the steppes or the desert to the Fertile Crescent. Among such movements were the migrations of the Amorites and the Canaanites into Palestine, and, in our Christian era, of the Mohammedan Arabs.

1. *The Sumerians.* As was the case in the Nile valley, the earliest of the three chapters of Mesopotamian history centers in the lower valley near the mouths of the twin rivers. As the Tigris and the Euphrates approach the Persian Gulf, they approach each other. This plain is Babylonia, the eastern end of the Fertile Crescent, known in the Old Testament as Shinar. It is about 170 miles in length by 40 in width. Like the Nile valley it is subject to very little rainfall, but under irrigation is equally as fertile, and at one time it produced great agricultural wealth.

Who the first inhabitants of the Babylonian plain were is still a mystery. Until recently most scholars have begun this chapter of ancient history with the Sumerians, whose civilization is the earliest which has left a trace of itself. Woolley says: "There is nothing to show to what race the first inhabitants of Mesopotamia belonged, but it is natural to connect them with the Semitic speaking Akkadians whom later on we find occupying the northern half of the river-valley . . . , a primitive people, not to say a barbarous people, who, while they had made some advance on the road to civilization, were yet very far from being what we should term a civilized community."<sup>(2)</sup> Speiser, who is excavating in Iraq, is convinced that the earliest inhabitants in the north bore a Semitic resemblance.<sup>(3)</sup> There is thus considerable evidence that a Semitic people inhabited lower Mesopotamia before the Sumerians. This was at least 4000 B. C.

But it is the Sumerians, a non-Semitic, white race, coming long before 3000 B. C., who are the first inhabitants who have left a recovered civilization. The primitive sculptures picture them with clean-shaven faces and heads, and wearing short woolen or skin cloaks. The fact that the Sumerians pictured

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<sup>2</sup> C. L. Woolley, *Ur of the Chaldees*, 1930, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> E. A. Speiser, *Mesopotamian Origins*, 1930, p. 270 f.



their gods with Semitic beards and hair suggests that they absorbed an earlier Semitic civilization. The Sumerians lived in low brick huts; they had cattle and grain; and they used wheel-carts; but the horse was unknown to them. They scratched picture records on clay, creating some 350 signs, each sign representing a syllable or word. These records show that in measuring time they used the lunar month and a thirteen-month year. As in Egypt, the years were not numbered but named after events which occurred in them. The Sumerians used the sexagesimal system of counting; that is, sixty was their unit, instead of ten as with us. A large number was so many sixties; in *Genesis* 6: 3, man's life was thought of, after the Fall, as two sixties instead of a great many. Our division of the circle (six sixties), the hour, and the minute, goes back to the Sumerians.

These early settlers had come into the Babylonian plain from a mountain home. This is shown by the fact that they associated their gods with high places. They built tower temples. (**Read *Genesis* 11: 1-9.**) This was their great contribution to architecture; it has survived in our church steeple. At the tower temple a wealthy priesthood lived, which ruled them. To the tower temple the peasants brought their offerings, and there prayers and incantations were made for the blessing of heaven.

The Sumerians differed from the Egyptians in the disposal of their dead; they buried them under their homes without tomb or coffin and without food offering. They thought of them as gathered into a great subterranean cave called *Aralu*.

2. *Beginnings of Semitic History.* What we call Babylonia emerged out of little city kingdoms—Agade, Babylon, Kish, Lagash, Nippur, Ur, and others less famous. The geographic divisions were called Sumer and Akkad—the south and the north. Akkad was the region occupied by Semites; Sumer was the region occupied by Sumerians. At what time the Semites entered the land is not known. “Apparently they came from the northwest.”<sup>(4)</sup> The oldest city in Akkad was Kish. Here the early Semitic nomads mobilized and learned how to match their bowmen against the solid phalanxes of Sumerian spearmen. The first Akkadian of fame was Sargon, king of Agade (about 2750 B. C.), the first great leader in the Semitic world. So

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<sup>4</sup> C. H. W. Johns, *Ancient Babylonia*, 1913, p. 19.



skillful in war was he that he scattered the phalanxes of the Sumerians and made himself the lord of the whole plain of Shinar. Then he led his archers from the mountains westward to the Mediterranean.

While Sargon was conquering the Sumerians by his military prowess, they conquered him by their civilization. The Semites adopted the Sumerian type of houses and learned to write their language in cuneiform (wedge-shaped) characters. From the Sumerians also they learned the art of sculpture and soon excelled them in it. While conquered, the Sumerians dominated, and, when the Akkadians weakened under the enervation of settled life, Sumer once more asserted itself and we have the kingdom of "Sumer and Akkad," under the rule of southern cities, headed by the ancient city of Ur. For over three centuries this government flourished. Cuneiform literature was born in this period, and early Sumerian myths and legends were reduced to writing.

When the dynasty of Ur fell, the dominion of Babylon was divided between two cities, Nisin and Larsa. Each furnished a dynasty which lasted for more than two hundred years. There was constant strife for supremacy between them, and finally the Elamites swept down from their mountain home in the east, overran the valley, and furnished the last two kings of the Larsan dynasty, Warad-sin and Rim-sin. Not a few scholars have identified Rim-sin with "Arioch king of Ellasar" (*Gen. 14:1*).

3. *The Early Babylonian Period.* Then there was a fresh migration of Semites from the northwest—people of Amurru (Amorites), who set up a new dynasty of kings at Babylon and at once began to fight their way towards the leadership of Sumer and Akkad. It was the sixth king of this line, Hammurabi (about 2050 B. C.) who drove out the Elamites from the old Sumerian cities and organized the united kingdom of Babylon. From his time onward the land is properly spoken of as Babylonia. It required thirty years of fighting to accomplish this, but Hammurabi survived his triumph twelve years and organized his kingdom with such skill that his name lives to this day. Two sources of knowledge of him have come down to us: (1) his letters, and (2) the code which bears his name. His letters reveal him as a great administrator; his code, as a great legislator. His code is the oldest known code of laws in the world.

It was chiseled on a shaft of diorite nearly eight feet high, and was discovered by the French explorers de Morgan and Scheil in the winter of 1901-02 at Susa, the capital of Elam, to which it had been carried by some Elamite conqueror. The laws cover a great variety of topics. They have to do with legal procedure and the regulation of social life. They set penalties for default, and punishment for crime. They regulate rents, wages, and fees. In many of their provisions, parallels may be found in the laws of Moses. After the death of Hammurabi, the country weakened and was overrun by the Hittites and the Kassites, a race of barbarians from the east who ruled in Babylon for 576 years. Their triumph marked the end of the old Babylonian civilization.

4. *The Rise of Assyria.* The next period of Semitic history takes us north of Babylonia, to the northeast portion of the Fertile Crescent. Here, on a natural plateau, sprang up the strongest nation of the ancient East, the Assyrians. Scholars are not agreed as to their origin. Some tell us they were of Mongoloid origin but in closer contact with Semitic civilization than their southern neighbors.<sup>5</sup> The Babylonians have been compared with the Greeks of a later day; the Assyrians were the Romans of the ancient eastern world. They gave the world the first example of a great organized state. Geography and climate combined to make them a strong people. Two-thirds of their territory was hills and mountains. They knew what it meant to battle with the snows of winter. In ancient bas-reliefs they are pictured as a short, stocky, kinky-haired race, of great endurance. About 3000 B. C. they had settled in the hills of Ashur, as their kindred had settled in the south. They quickly absorbed the civilization of the Sumerians which was carried to them, and in time they became most proficient in building, writing, and the art of war. They were also under the influence of peoples to the north and west. At times, the strong Hittites ruled them, but, mostly, they were under the dominion of Babylonia. It was not until about 1500 B. C. that Assyria became an independent state. Ashur-uballit proclaimed his independence of Babylonia, and his son moved westward to keep open the road to the Mediterranean, without which an inland kingdom could not hope to be a world power. In the west, the Assyrians found other Semites: the Phœnicians, who were

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<sup>5</sup> S. Smith, *Early History of Assyria*, 1928, p. 121.



deeply entrenched in their city kingdoms by the Mediterranean Sea; the Arameans, who were settling in Syria; and the Hebrews, in Palestine. The Arameans, whose most powerful city-kingdom was Damascus, became the merchants of the Fertile Crescent. They were a cultivated people; they gave the world the first alphabet. Their language became the common business language of the Fertile Crescent. In time it displaced Hebrew and in Jesus' day was the spoken language of Palestine. These little western kingdoms long blocked the way of the Assyrian advance and held the army-kingdom of the Tigris in check.

5. *The Assyrian Empire.* The king who made the name of Assyria a terror in the west was Ashur-nasirpal II (885-860 B. C.). He was the pathfinder for subsequent Assyrian invasions of Syria and Palestine. His method was terror. "His usual procedure after the capture of a hostile city was to burn it, and then to mutilate all the grown men prisoners by cutting off their hands and ears and putting out their eyes; after which they were piled up in a great heap to perish in torture from sun, flies, their wounds, and suffocation; the children, both boys and girls, were all burnt alive at the stake; and the chief was carried off to Assyria to be flayed alive for the king's delectation."<sup>6</sup> His son, Shalmaneser II (860-825 B. C.) was the Napoleon of the Fertile Crescent. For twenty-six years he took the field in person for an annual expedition to the West. Under him the shadow of Assyria first fell upon Israel, when Ahab and his western allies opposed him in the battle of Karkar (854 B. C.). Under Adad-nirari III (812-783 B. C.), Damascus was subdued and Syria was placed under tribute.

The middle of the eighth century B. C. witnessed the retrenchment of Assyria within its original limits. It was now struggling for existence rather than for supremacy, but new life was injected into the tottering empire by Tiglath-pileser IV, the "Pul" of the Old Testament. This vigorous military leader solved the problem of holding the West. Heretofore the weakness of Assyria had been, not in making conquests, but in retaining them. The new monarch devised the plan of deporting the leaders of a conquered state and then leaving it to rule itself under the supervision of an Assyrian deputy. When Rezin of Damascus organized a revolt of small western states, Tiglath-

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<sup>6</sup> H. R. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East*, p. 445.



pileser swiftly captured the city and deported king and leaders to Kir. (**Read II Kings 16: 5-9.**) Assyria was now master of western Asia. The doom of Israel, one of the confederates, was sealed. It did not actually fall until the days of Sargon II in 722 B. C., but the fate of the Syrian kingdoms made it plain that to resist the armies of Assyria meant annihilation. (**Read II Kings 17: 1-6.**)

6. *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria.* The religion of Babylonia and Assyria, like that of Egypt, was a nature religion. In that respect there was little difference between them. The world was full of spirits; the friendly ones were gods, while the hostile ones were demons. The sky was personified as Anu; the sun, as Marduk in the south and as Shamash in the north—a favorite deity with agriculturalists; the moon, as Sin—a favorite with nomads; the earth, as Enlil (or Bel, from which we have the Baal of the Canaanites)—the chief god of the ancient Sumerians; the water, as Ea; the life of spring, as Ishtar; the rainstorm, as Adad; etc. These gods were quite local in their sphere of influence; the gods of conquered regions were absorbed in the gods of the conquerors. When Babylon became supreme, Marduk, its sungod, gradually subordinated all the other deities of the land. There is an inscription which reads:

“Ea is the Marduk of canals;  
Ninib is the Marduk of strength;  
Nergal is the Marduk of war;  
Zamama is the Marduk of battle;  
Enlil is the Marduk of sovereignty and control;  
Nabu is the Marduk of possession;  
Sin is the Marduk of the illumination of the night;  
Shamash is the Marduk of judgments;  
Adad is the Marduk of rain;  
Tishpak is the Marduk of armies;  
Gal is the Marduk of power;  
Shukamunu is the Marduk of the harvest.”

We see here, therefore, an approach to monotheism, similar to that which we saw in Egypt under Amenophis, who also made sun worship supreme. The ancient Semitics had a creation story. Marduk was the creator. He is said to have made the firmament and the earth from the two halves of the dragon-

monster Tiamat, whom he split from head to tail with his spear of light. (**Read, in contrast, Genesis 1:1-31.**) They had also a flood story, in which the hero Ut-naphistim was saved in a ship. They had, too, a myth of ten kings of great longevity who ruled between the creation and the flood.

With the Babylonians and the Assyrians, human virtue consisted in doing the will of the gods, whose approval was to be sought at any cost, and whose disapproval could be appeased by offerings. Sin was disobedience of custom, which was a matter of technique in the hands of the priests. Beautiful psalms have been preserved, the main note of which is sorrow for failure to observe the ritual. High regard was given to truth and rectitude in business transactions. Monogamy seems to have been the ideal of marriage, although concubinage and slavery were practiced. Unlike the Egyptians, the Babylonians and the Assyrians had little faith in a future life. Death was an unmitigated evil; *Aralu*, the abode of the dead, was a fixed condition of helplessness. The Babylonians and the Assyrians were ostentatiously religious, but their religion at best was a species of fatalism.

### Questions

1. What was the second home of early civilization?
2. Describe the Fertile Crescent.
3. What civilization sprang up there?
4. Who were the Sumerians? What contributions did they make to civilization?
5. What were the beginnings of Semitic history?
6. Trace the rise of the united kingdom of Babylon.
7. Who were the Assyrians?
8. What early attempts were made by the Assyrians to form a world empire?
9. Tell the story of the Assyrian Empire to the fall of the kingdom of Israel.
10. Describe the religion of Babylonia and Assyria.

### Topics for Further Study

#### *The Fertile Crescent*

Make a careful study of the geography of the Fertile Crescent, giving particular attention to Babylonia, Assyria, Syria, and Palestine. Use a good map, and consult Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias.

*The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*

In making this study, constantly keep in mind the religion of the Hebrews. Contrast the religious beliefs of the Hebrews with those of the Babylonians and Assyrians. W. J. Moulton's *The Witness of Israel* will prove helpful. See also articles in encyclopedias. In what respects was the Hebrew faith superior to that of these other ancient peoples?

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## CHAPTER XV

# THE ANCIENT WORLD: THE CHALDEANS, THE MEDES AND PERSIANS

### Bible Readings—

*Nahum 3: 1-7*—The Fall of Nineveh

*II Chronicles 36: 9-21*—The Chaldean Conquest of Judah

*Daniel 5: 1-29*—Belshazzar's Feast

*Isaiah 45: 1-4*—Cyrus, Jehovah's Anointed

The Assyrian Empire was a military machine, and, like all such powers, finally collapsed of exhaustion; but it went down in a blaze of glory. Sargon II, in whose reign the kingdom of Israel fell, was a great builder, and his successors even surpassed him. His son Sennacherib (705-681 B. C.), whose name is best known of all the kings of Assyria because of his prominence in Old Testament history, was a great statesman. His name was feared in Egypt as well as in Asia Minor, and he utterly destroyed Babylon. After the brief reign of Esarhaddon (681-669 B. C.), who restored Babylon, Ashurbanipal (669-629 B. C.) pushed his conquests to Thebes on the Nile and to Susa in the Elam mountains. This grim warrior spent his last years building the first of the great libraries of the world, from whose treasures have been recovered the Semitic classics from which we have learned what we know of the religion of the Babylonians and Assyrians. Assyria was in the sunset haze of its glory.

1. *The Chaldean Empire.* Meanwhile a virile Semitic people known as the Kaldi, or Chaldeans, had made themselves masters of Babylon. Under their vigorous king, Nabopolassar, they threw off the yoke of Assyria, and, making an alliance with the Medes, in 612 B. C. they laid siege to Nineveh, which was finally taken, while the last king perished in the holocaust of his palace. The fall of Nineveh is the theme of Nahum's prophecy. (Read *Nahum 3: 1-7*.) In 605 B. C., the Chaldeans under the brilliant leadership of Nebuchadnezzar defeated the combined armies of the west, including an army from Egypt and the remnant of the Assyrian army, and Chaldea was master of the Fertile Crescent. Nebuchadnezzar succeeded to the throne, and,

returning to Babylon, he began the brilliant reign of conquest and building which has made his name one of the most famous in history. More is said about him in the Old Testament than of any other foreign monarch. (**Look up “Nebuchadnezzar” in a concordance.**) He conducted great military campaigns, destroying Jerusalem and carrying the leaders as captives to Babylon in 586 B. C. (**Read II Chronicles 36: 9-21.**) He surpassed his Assyrian predecessors as a builder, rebuilding the temples of the ancient gods and building the most famous royal house of ancient times. Between these he laid out a festival avenue, which passed through the famous “Ishtar Gate.” The royal palace, which was twice the size of Jerusalem, and its famous hanging gardens, were one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Nebuchadnezzar’s greatest work was the wall of Babylon, with the temple tower to Bel. Herodotus, the Jewish historian, says the outer wall was 55 miles in circumference, wide enough for four chariots abreast, and having 100 gates. This wall extended from the Tigris to the Euphrates. The latter was spanned by a bridge—the earliest known.

The glory of Babylon set as rapidly as it rose. In 556 B. C. the Chaldean dynasty came to an end. The priests of Babylon chose a peace-loving archæologist to succeed Nebuchadnezzar, Nabonidus by name, who spent his time making researches in the temples. To him we owe our earliest knowledge of the great past which lay behind him, and we read that he celebrated the recovery of an ancient inscription with as much ceremony as that with which an Assyrian king would have commemorated the conquest of an enemy. He was entirely absorbed in this sort of work, leaving the military direction of his kingdom to Belshazzar, his son, who is the Babylonian “king” of the book of *Daniel*. (**Read Daniel 5: 1-29.**) With all its splendor, the Chaldean civilization looked to the past. Its great builders thought they were restoring the days of Hammurabi. They revived the old practice of trying to discover the future from the heavenly bodies. They divided the equator into 360 degrees and laid the foundation of the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac, which the Persians completed. The five planets then known were regarded as controlling the destinies of men, and five leading Babylonian divinities were identified with them. Ishtar is Venus, Marduk is Jupiter, Nebo is Mercury, Ninib is Mars, and Nergal



is Saturn. But while the Chaldeans thus developed astrology, which was the forerunner of the science of astronomy, their faces were turned to the past. They revived archaic forms of speech and writing. In effect they petrified Babylonian culture—which, in the end, meant stagnation and death.

2. *The Medo-Persian Empire.* A new race, a vigorous young power which the Chaldeans were unable to resist, now took up the task of civilization. For almost five milleniums the sons of Shem and of Ham had led the world in culture. But now the sons of Japheth were to assert themselves, and the rod of power has never since passed from their hands. The peoples we have thus far been studying came from the great river valleys which lie in the south of the Fertile Crescent. North of it lie the great northern grasslands, stretching from the Black Sea far into Asia, which were the home of a great white race which we call Indo-European. Just where the original home of the race was, has never been fully determined, but it seems reasonably certain that it was somewhere in the great grassy steppe northeast of the Caspian Sea.<sup>(1)</sup>

Divided into numerous tribes, these Asian nomads migrated at will, seeking pasture for their flocks and cattle. Their outstanding possession was the horse, which was native to the wide-sweeping pasture land of the steppes. The capture and the taming of the wild horse was their initial contribution to civilization—as great a contribution in its day as the invention of the steam locomotive, the automobile, or the aeroplane. From these nomads the horse passed into the service of the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians. As these tribes wandered, some turned eastward and became the Indian and the Persian peoples, and some turned westward and became the Europeans. Some of these tribes settled in the great steppe east of the Caspian Sea and became the Aryan people of history. They were a people of great possibilities. From them came the Aryans of India, who have left us their sacred books, the vedas, written in Sanskrit, and the culture of the old Indian civilization. From them also came the Iranians who settled in the plateau which stretches from the Zagros mountains to the Indus River, and from whom sprang the Medes and the Persians. It was here that Kyaxares, as the Greeks called him, one of the pioneers of the Aryan

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<sup>1</sup> J. H. Breasted, *The Conquest of Civilization*, p. 190.



invasion of the West, had united a number of Median tribes; and with these, when Nineveh fell, he established to the north of Nebuchadnezzar's domain the empire of Media, with its western boundary at the Halys River in Asia Minor, and its eastern frontier on the Indus. West of the Halys River was the Lydian Empire, which was the buffer state which stopped the Median advance against Greece, very much as Belgium stopped the German advance against France in the World War. The king of this little empire was Alyattes and the capital was Sardis. In 558 B. C., Alyattes met Kyaxares in battle on the banks of the Halys River, but an eclipse of the sun so terrified both armies that the engagement was discontinued. Then Nebuchadnezzar made overtures to both parties, and a triple alliance was formed and cemented by intermarriage. Thus Lydia was drawn away from Greek control and became a part of a great West Asia confederacy.

This alliance lasted until after its founders had passed away. It was still in force when there fell across it the shadow of a man who was destined to unite all western Asia under one scepter and for the first time in history to lead an Eastern army into Europe. This was Cyrus, the Persian, known in history as Cyrus the Great. He succeeded in uniting the Persian tribes into one nation. He then set himself to the task of disrupting the great triple alliance to the west. His strategy was to attack the powers one by one. He first made conquest of Media, which he then made a confederate, and thus organized the Medo-Persian Empire. In 545 B. C. he advanced against Babylon and struck a swift blow against its northern fortifications, manned by an army under Belshazzar. Babylon seems to have repulsed him. Without delaying to lay siege to the city, Cyrus threw his army of bowmen and horsemen against Lydia, whose king at that time was Croesus, famous as the wealthiest man of his day, and Croesus was taken prisoner. Within five years Cyrus' Persian kingdom extended from the Indus to the Bosphorus. Then he returned to Babylon, and in 538 B. C. he seems to have taken the proud city without striking a blow. (Read Isaiah 45: 1-4.)

Thus the Semitic East collapsed before the Indo-European advance. Cyrus fell in battle, fighting against the nomads of the northeast in 528 B. C. His son Cambyses three years later con-

quered Egypt in a single battle. It is said he used the stratagem of placing before his army cats, dogs, and other animals sacred to the Egyptians. After this victory he invaded Ethiopia, but his army nearly perished in the desert. Returning to Memphis, he acted like a madman till his death (522 B. C.) In twenty-five years of conquest the Persians welded into one great empire the powers which had dominated the world for many centuries.

Darius (521 B. C.), who succeeded Cambyses, organized what his predecessors had conquered. He divided his vast empire into twenty "satrapies," or districts, each governed by a satrap. These officers were appointed by the king and were responsible to him alone. The system was the most absolute autocracy in history. It was an achievement for which the Assyrian Empire had paved the way. Darius lives in history as a benign ruler. He encouraged local development, but his word was absolute, a fact which survives in the saying, "As unchanging as the laws of the Medes and the Persians." For the first time in history the world was ruled by one man.

Darius made Susa his capital and chief residence, particularly in the summer months, although he liked to spend the colder months in the milder climate of Babylon. The Persian monarchs, however, were loyal to the land from which they came. Cyrus built his famous palace at Pasargadæ, where he had defeated the Medes; and Darius built his at Persepolis, near by; and here the tombs of Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, and other Persian rulers, still stand.

Under Persian rule the world enjoyed two centuries of peace. Peace brought prosperity; prosperity led to luxury; and luxury has proved to be the downfall of nations throughout history. When Alexander the Great moved eastward (333 B. C.), the great Persian Empire crumbled.

3. *The Religion of the Medes and the Persians.* When the Aryans invaded Media there was a tribe or clan which they could not absorb, though they reduced it to political subordination. This group became known as the Magi, and, because of their religion, they became the priesthood of the new people. In this respect they were like the tribe of Levi in Israel, or the Brahmans in India. The chief elements of their religion were sun worship and fire worship. Fire is the symbol of purity, and purity characterized their religion. They would not contaminate



themselves with a dead body—not even by so much as to bury it. The bodies of the dead were left for the vultures or carrion dogs. In order to secure purity they practiced next-of-kin marriage. In their capacity of physician they practiced healing by magic—a word derived from their name. They were renowned also for their skill in interpreting dreams—Daniel belonged to their order in Babylon. Contrary to the Semites they looked upon mountains as a blot on the earth, to be removed in the Regeneration to which they looked forward. Instead of a polytheism, their religion was rather a dualism. Ormazd, the wise spirit, the principle of light, was the patron and protector of the good; Ahriman was the principle of evil.

The prophet and reformer of the Magian religion was Zoroaster, a prophet who lived about 1000 B. C.<sup>(2)</sup> Zoroaster sought to interpret the inherited Magian system in terms of life, which to him was an unceasing conflict between good and evil. The substance of his teaching is to be found in this sentence: "The two primal spirits who revealed themselves in vision as twins are the Better and the Bad in thought, word, and action. And between these two the wise know to choose aright, the foolish not so." To Zoroaster, the Better is a person, whom he calls Ahuramazda, "Lord of Wisdom." He is surrounded by a great company of helpers, or angels, the chief of which is Mithras, light. Opposed to Ahuramazda is Ahriman, the spirit of evil. He too has his helpers, or demons. By a right choice, the man who obeys law helps in the final victory of the good spirit over the spirit of deceit and treachery. He who leads such a life has the help of a moral adviser, and in this way he will realize, in this world and hereafter, the kingdom of blessings, with its reward of perfect happiness and immortality. A final judgment and a restitution of all things complete the system.

The religion of Zoroaster was a noble crusade for the highest type of living, far in advance of the religions of Egypt, Babylonia, and Assyria. It greatly influenced the religion of the Hebrews. "As in the case of Mohammed," says Breasted, "it is probable that Zoroaster could neither read nor write, for the Iranians possessed no system of writing in his day." <sup>(3)</sup> But fragments of hymns and of instruction have been preserved in quotation,

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<sup>2</sup> So Hopkins, Breasted, and others.

<sup>3</sup> J. H. Breasted, *The Conquest of Civilization*, p. 195.



and they are collectively called the *Avesta*, the Bible of the Persians.

### Questions

1. Relate the story of the last days of the Assyrian Empire.
2. What power succeeded Assyria in world dominion?
3. Tell the story of the Chaldean Empire.
4. What new power took up the task of civilization?
5. Who were the Medes and the Persians?
6. What contribution to civilization was made by the Median nomads?
7. Tell the story of the creation of the Persian Empire.
8. Who were the Magi?
9. Give the chief elements of the Persian religion.

### Topics for Further Study

#### *The Aryans*

Consult J. H. Moulton's *The Religion of the Magi*.

#### *The Influence of the Religion of Zoroaster on the Hebrew Religion*

Read J. H. Moulton's *The Religion of the Magi*.

#### *The Book of Daniel*

Make a careful study of *Daniel*, using such encyclopedias, Bible dictionaries, and commentaries as may be available. Note particularly the historical setting of the story of Daniel.

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## CHAPTER XVI

### THE ANCIENT WORLD: THE HITTITES AND THE PHILISTINES

#### Bible Readings—

|                              |   |                                |
|------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| <i>Exodus</i> 23: 20-33      | } | —References to the Hittites    |
| <i>Joshua</i> 11: 1-9        |   |                                |
| <i>II Chronicles</i> 8: 7, 8 |   |                                |
| <i>I Samuel</i> 4: 1-11      | } | —References to the Philistines |
| <i>I Samuel</i> 17: 1-54     |   |                                |
| <i>II Samuel</i> 5: 17-25    |   |                                |

A fourth region whose people were destined both directly and indirectly to influence the course of history in the land of Canaan was Asia Minor. This land was, most probably, the original home of the Philistines and for a long time the borrowed home of the Hittites.

1. *Hittite History.* In the mountain regions of Asia Minor, central Syria, and the Upper Euphrates, there lived an ancient people of mixed Aryan and Caucasian elements. In early pictures of them, found on ancient bas-reliefs, some are represented in Nordic dress and snowshoes, while others are represented with the pigtail of the Chinese, indicating Tartar origin. These mixed people, commonly called "Hittites" in the Old Testament, during the second and a part of the first millennium B. C. controlled a large part of the Near East. (Read *Exodus* 23: 20-33; *Joshua* 11: 1-9; *II Chronicles* 8: 7, 8.)

At first, apparently, there was no central Hittite power, but rather a number of independent city-kingdoms. Later, however, a concentration of power took place, with two main centers—one at Carchemish on the Euphrates, the other at Boghaz Keui in Asia Minor. The first mention of the Hittites in history is that of their invasion of Babylon in 1750 B. C., when they took the city, killed the king, and then retreated leaving the country at the mercy of the Kassites, who, as we have seen, came in at that time and established a dynasty which ruled for over five hundred years.

Of the beginnings of the kingdom of the Hittites little is known. The story of their western capital, Boghaz Keui (about a hundred miles east of the modern Angora) is connected with

a great dynasty founded by Khattusil I, but made famous by his son Subbi-luliuma. This brilliant monarch, known as the "Great King," by a series of intrigues got possession of the entire north country from the Halys River to the Tigris, upsetting the Egyptian supremacy which had been set up in that region by Thothmes III. With the help of Amorite chiefs, and, by playing party against party, Subbi-luliuma soon made his power felt throughout the north and the east, and finally concluded a treaty by the terms of which his rule was recognized in Upper Mesopotamia and Amurru. Mursil, his son, accordingly, inherited an empire which stretched from the Phrygian mountains and the Black Sea in the north to the Armenian mountains in the east and to Galilee in the south. For a decade the Hittites enjoyed undisputed supremacy. Then trouble began with the advance of the ever formidable Assyrians under Shalmaneser I, and of the strong XIX dynasty which arose in Egypt under Seti I, who swiftly moved northward to reclaim what the preceding Egyptian dynasty surrendered. The Hittite army was defeated, and Egyptian prestige was restored.

For fifteen years, the remainder of the reign of Seti I, there was peace; but Ramses II, on his accession, immediately broke it, with results which proved disastrous to his country. Mursil had been succeeded by his son Mutallu, who matched his youthful energies against those of his young Egyptian rival. He assembled the largest army that had ever been mustered in the north, concerning which his own words were, "They covered the mountains and hills like grasshoppers for number." Ramses valiantly went to meet his formidable enemy and a fateful battle was joined at Kadesh on the Orontes (1295 B. C.). Neither side seems to have been victorious. Ramses, in his inscription at Karnak commemorating his campaign, claimed a brilliant victory, but Mutallu never made peace, and the fact that Ramses returned to Egypt and that all Syria and Palestine went over to the Hittites, would seem to tell a different story. Three years later Ramses returned and succeeded in fighting his way through the valley of Jezreel to the Hauran, but while Mutallu lived he did not dispute the latter's control of the north. Mutallu was assassinated, and his brother Khattusil II succeeded him. Weary of the state of war, he proposed peace to Egypt, and an offensive and defensive peace was made with Ramses II, the terms of which



were inscribed on a silver tablet and sent by the Hittite king to Ramses. The treaty is preserved in an Egyptian translation engraved on the walls of the temple at Karnak. Neither party was henceforth to invade the other's lands, the boundary between them being North Lebanon, and, in the event of war with a third party, troops were to be furnished as in a common cause. The treaty was received with much ceremony at both courts.

The treaty of Khattusil and Ramses lasted throughout the lifetime of the two monarchs. Egypt was satisfied with its tribute, and the Hittites with their undisputed possession of the northern country. This peaceful day, however, was a short one. The rising power of the Assyrians put a check to Hittite expansion and soon the Hittites began to disintegrate. The great Hittite Empire crumbled as rapidly as it had been created, and before the end of the eighth century B. C. the greater part of its holdings had been absorbed by Assyria and Phrygia.

2. *Hittite Religion.* All that we know of Hittite religion is gathered from seal-cylinders and inscriptions. Primitive animistic conceptions characterize it. Springs, rivers, trees, and mountains were considered sacred. The famous stone lion found at Qoqar Quyu in the Anti-Taurus mountains is interpreted as owing its position to the sacredness of the mountain. Like other nature religions, that of the Hittites was at first strongly localized. A pantheon came only with the creation of the empire. In that pantheon the outstanding figure was that of the Mother-Goddess. Originally a nature cult, arising from the productivity of the earth, the religion of the Hittites developed into the idea of a universal mother. The sense of dependence upon the productive power of nature was keen in a mountain empire like that of the Hittites. In the sculpture the Mother-Goddess is attended by a number of female figures which may be the forerunners of the Amazons of a later day. She is followed by a young male figure, a beardless youth, doubtless her son, with a spear and battle-ax in his hands and a dagger in his belt. Still another figure appears in the sculpture, a bearded male figure. He holds in his right hand a cluster of grapes, and in his left, several stalks of grain. He is the consort of the Mother-Goddess, and his presence with her represents the union of the life-giving forces which the Hittites saw in nature. "Just

as the sun's return in the springtime to shine upon the earth was necessary to revivify the dead year," says Garstang, "so was the periodic union of the god with the goddess, that the earth might bring forth her fruits in due season."<sup>(1)</sup>

The chief male deity of the Hittites was the storm-god, Teshub. He bears in one hand the three-pronged thunderbolt, and in the other, the bow. He was the special deity of the armies and was a great favorite.

As to the beliefs of the Hittites, beyond what is reflected in their nature worship, we have no sources of information.

**3. Philistine History.** Our main source of information concerning another ancient people, the Philistines, is the Old Testament. There are many references to them, both in the historical and in the prophetic books. From a careful study of these passages (for example, *Gen. 10:14; Amos 9:7; Jer. 47:4*), and from certain non-Biblical references to them, the conclusion has been reached that the Philistines were a Greek people, of the civilization which flourished in Crete, either from that island or from the near-by mainland of Asia Minor.

It was toward the close of the twelfth century B. C., when the Hittites and the Egyptians had ceased to be aggressive, that the Philistines, leaving their northern home, streamed down the coastal plain of Canaan, driving the Hebrews back into the hills. They would, no doubt, have overrun Egypt, had not Ramses III turned them back from its border. They then settled in the Canaanite plain, which has since borne their name. They took over the Canaanite cities, Askalon, Gaza, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron. These cities, which now acted as a unit, constituted the Philistine confederacy, which was ruled over by a *seren*, or "tyrant."

The first conflict between the Hebrews and the Philistines occurred during the high-priesthood of Eli. (**Read I Samuel 4: 1-11.**) The Hebrews brought their ark from Shiloh, to accompany their army in its struggle with the Philistine hosts, but lost it in the battle of Aphek. They were more successful, however, in a second engagement, and in the days of Saul, by the brilliant exploits of Jonathan and David (**Read I Samuel 17:1-54**), they succeeded in holding the Philistines in check. After David's banishment, the Philistines once again advanced

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<sup>1</sup> J. Garstang, *The Land of the Hittites*, 1910, p. 357.



steadily, and it was only after Saul's death, when David became king of all Israel, that their power was finally broken. (**Read II Samuel 5: 17-25.**) Thereafter they practically dropped out of history, and but for a few scattered references in the annals of the later Assyrian kings, we should not know of their continued existence.

4. *Philistine Religion.* In their religion the Philistines were borrowers from other peoples. We read of several deities associated with them—Ashtoreth and Dagon; but these are Semitic names and indicate that these gods were borrowed deities. Dagon, for example, was a patron deity of Nineveh as early as the time of Tiglath-pileser I. The most original thing about the Philistines probably was their soothsaying, which is referred to by Isaiah (*Isa. 2: 6*).

Our chief interest in the Philistines is that it was they who, by their pressure upon the Hebrew tribes, practically forced the latter to form a united Israel, a real Hebrew nation.

### Questions

1. Who were the Hittites and where did they flourish?
2. What can you tell of their history?
3. What was the nature of the religion of the Hittites? Who were their chief deities?
4. Who were the Philistines? Recall what is known of their history.
5. How did the Philistines influence Israel?

### Topics for Further Study

#### *Hittite Cities*

Read J. Garstang's *The Land of the Hittites*.

#### *Philistine Remains in Palestine*

Read R. A. S. Macalister's *The Philistines: Their History and Civilization*.

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## CHAPTER XVII

### THE LAND OF CANAAN

#### Bible Readings—

*Numbers* 13:17-27 } —Early Hebrew Impressions of Canaan  
*Deuteronomy* 8:7-9 }  
*Deuteronomy* 7:1-6 —The Early Inhabitants of Canaan

At the extreme western end of the Fertile Crescent lies a little country, scarcely the size of the state of New Jersey, which has had a place in human history out of all proportion to its size. It is quite certain that no other country has had such a hold on human interest. To begin with, it is the most picturesque land on earth. Whether we contemplate its variation in altitude, ranging from 10,000 feet above sea level to 1,300 feet below, or its kaleidoscopic natural divisions—four vari-colored strips from sea to desert—we may say of the land as a whole, what has been said of its river valley, "There may be something on the surface of another planet to match it; there is nothing on this."<sup>(1)</sup> Geologists tell us that the contour of the land is due to "an unsuccessful attempt to extend the Mediterranean Sea farther to the east and southeast"; that at the end of the Tertiary period a series of clefts running from north to south was formed; and that, in the earth's cooling, the western range of the Lebanons was broken and twisted at mount Carmel, just as if the sea had broken in the lower mountain wall. Another transverse ridge shut out the Red Sea and shut in the Dead Sea, while the water from the glaciers of the Lebanons made the fresh-water system of the land. (**Study carefully a map of Canaan.**)

1. *The Topography of the Land.* The land of Canaan is a land of hills and valleys. Wherever one enters the land one must "go up" to its central points. The main mountain system runs north and south in two ranges, falling more steeply on the eastern side than on the western. These ranges continue through the southern two-thirds of the land as table-lands—Anti-Lebanon on the eastern side of the Jordan, which is broken up into the highlands of Bashan, Gilead, and Moab; and Lebanon

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<sup>1</sup> G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 468.

on the western side, which is broken up into the highlands of Galilee, Samaria, and Judea.

Topographically the land of Canaan lies in five natural divisions: (1) the maritime plain, extending along the Mediterranean Sea, from eight to twenty miles in width; (2) the Shephelah, or low hills, from 300 to 500 feet in height; (3) the central plateau, ranging from 2,000 to 4,000 feet in elevation broken by the plain of Esdraelon, north of mount Carmel; (4) the Jordan valley, a vast depression or rift, extending north and south the entire length of the country, with its three lakes, Huleh, Galilee, and the Dead Sea, dropping from 7 feet above sea level to 1,300 feet below sea level; and (5) the eastern table-land, lifted to from 2,000 to 3,000 feet above sea level and stretching to the vast eastern desert.

*2. Names and Characteristics.* To the Babylonians and Elamites the land was known as Amurru, or "Westland"; to the Hebrews entering the land it was *Canaan* (*Gen. 12:5*), probably "Lowland." After the conquest by Joshua it was frequently called "the land of Israel" (*I Sam. 13:19*). It was later called *Palestine*, the Greek and Latin word for "Philistine," the name of the Cretan rivals for the possession of the land whom the Hebrews never completely dispossessed (*Isa. 14:29*). "The holy land," though occurring but once in the Bible (*Zech. 2:12*), is the name now most frequently used by Christians.

Though the Old Testament repeatedly pictures the land of Canaan as a land rich in natural resources (**Read Numbers 13:17-27; Deuteronomy 8:7-9**), it should be remembered that these descriptions came from a people who had long been wandering in a desert and who naturally found the cultivated land of the Canaanites rich in comparison with the uncultivated lands of the wilderness. Further it should be recalled that the abundant fruitage of the land was the result of the most diligent cultivation. As a matter of fact, Palestine is a land largely without water—from April to October there is no rainfall—and its springs are few. In America the Jordan would be called a creek, and the other rivers, brooks, many of them being dry in summer. It is a "thirsty land," watered chiefly by the dew which mount Hermon distills. Its vineyards flourished on artificial terraces. To our Western eyes it is a rocky, bleak land—particularly in the southern part, where "the great and terrible



wilderness" seems to stretch its fingers northward, as if it would seize Jerusalem. It is a land adapted to sheep and goat raising, but for the most part "a dry and weary land, where no water is" (Ps. 63: 1).

3. *Its Strategic Situation.* What the land lacks in natural resources, it gains by its location. With no harbors on its bleak coast to make it a port, with the vast desert on the east walling it in, this little land was made by nature a bridge between Eurasia and Africa. Over that bridge passed the trade caravans of its powerful neighbors on the Euphrates and the Nile, the early centers of civilization. The oldest and most notable route came up from Egypt, followed the coast to mount Carmel, and there divided, one road continuing along the coast as far as Phœnicia, the other crossing the plain of Esdraelon and passing through the valley of Jezreel to the Jordan valley, where it forked into a road into northern Syria and a road to Damascus. A second great main route ran from Elath on the Red Sea to Damascus; in general, it corresponds to the later Mohammedan pilgrimage route to Mecca. Then there were caravan routes from Tyre and Sidon to Damascus, and from Jerusalem and Jericho into Perea, and from Gaza to Petra. Instead of being remote, the land of Canaan was, therefore, one of the most accessible lands in that ancient world.

4. *Pre-Hebrew Canaan.* Primitive life was the same in Canaan as in other lands. The implements collected through excavation show the presence of both paleolithic (early stone age) and neolithic (late stone age) man. Macalister's excavations at Gezer showed that in the late stone age that city was inhabited by an aboriginal, non-Semitic race of small stature who lived in caves and who cremated their dead. They have been thought to be akin to the Horites who dwelt in mount Seir (Gen. 14: 6). Archæological notes in the Old Testament refer to Anakim and Rephaim, as aboriginal giants, but no skeletons of such a race have been found. It is interesting that these peoples are said to have lived just in the regions where the largest collections of flints have been found. Other names of primitive peoples are also given—Emim, Zamzummim, and Zuzim—but their names signify nothing as to their identity; they reflect only their unintelligible non-Semitic speech.

By 3000 B. C. there were pronounced movements westward on



the part of the Semites of the east. Migration to the west was the one way out for over-population. This made necessary the conquest of the Phœnician plain. The discovery of the cedars of Lebanon became the motive for the westward advance of such kings as Sargon of Agade, and Gudea of Lagash. Soon the Amorites were in the land and with them came the city civilization revealed by the walls, houses, cisterns, and implements—hand-mills, jars, wine-presses, ovens, and the like—which archæology has recovered. Then came another Semitic wave of migration, and by about 1500 B. C. the Semitic Canaanites were in possession of the land. "We are entirely ignorant of the course of events," says Bertholet, "by which the Canaanite population gradually gained the upper hand over the Amorites."<sup>(2)</sup> Both peoples were Semites; their manner of life was the same. But externally the division between the two periods is marked by the conquest of the land by the Egyptians. When the Egyptians drove the Hyksos out of their land, they did not stop at the border. Under the powerful Thothmes III, Palestine was brought under Egyptian control. The Hittite and Amorite influence was broken, and when the Egyptian tide receded, it was the Canaanite who was then in the land; that is, his civilization dominated, while the Hittites and the Amorites were in scattered settlements. It was a mixed population which the Hebrews found, and this is reflected by the Old Testament catalogue of six or seven "nations" with which the Hebrews had to contend when they entered the land.<sup>(3)</sup> (**Read Deuteronomy 7: 1-6.**)

5. *Canaanite Civilization.* As it was the Canaanite civilization which confronted the Hebrews when they entered the land, we shall look into it a little more closely. The Canaanites were town-dwellers. They succeeded the Amorites who also were town-dwellers before them. These towns or cities were surrounded by massive walls, as present-day excavation is constantly showing. When the Hebrews entered the land, almost every prominent hill was occupied by such a city. Within the

<sup>2</sup> A. Bertholet, *A History of Hebrew Civilization*, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> J. G. Duncan, in *Digging up Biblical History*, 1931, Vol. I, p. 89, thus classifies the inhabitants of Canaan: the Amorites were the inhabitants of the land prior to the arrival of the Hittites—i.e., about 2000 B. C. The Canaanites were the Amorites and Hittites amalgamated, after Egyptian occupation, 2000-1200 B. C. The Jebusites were simply a branch of this amalgamation. The Perizzites were the metal-workers among the Hittites—"parzi" being the Hittite word for iron. The Hivites were the Hittite villagers. Thus they are all branches of one people.

walls were comfortable houses built of stone. Here were to be found, also, government, industries, trade, writing, religion. Thothmes III, in an inscription at Karnak, gives a list of the booty secured when he captured Megiddo in 1479 B. C., which shows the wealth of the city: in addition to horses and chariots and armor, there were gold, precious stones, drinking-bowls, couches of ivory, inlaid furniture, bags of wheat, and "wine lying in cellars like flood water." The Hittites had introduced iron into the land, and the Canaanites had chariots of iron and implements of iron. Writing was common, usually in Babylonian characters on clay tablets. About this time the Canaanite Phœnicians invented the alphabet, and the Hebrews found it already in use.

With the Canaanites, as with all ancient peoples, religion was prominent. While Babylonian and Egyptian deities were honored in some localities, the chief religion of the land was Baalism. "Baal" is not a proper noun but a generic name for "master" or "fertilizer" and was used to indicate the divine owner of the soil. Baal worship originally was a kind of sun worship, but among the Canaanites it had degenerated into a worship of the power of reproduction. As Bertholet puts it, "Baal worship reeks strongly of the earth."<sup>4</sup> The Baal was, therefore, the local spirit of fertility. He controlled the fruits of the land. He watered it—from below, through springs, always precious to the Semite, and from above, by rain. He was the husbandman's god, but that meant also the cattle-breeder's god, since the cattle were dependent upon the soil for pasture. Baal was associated, now with a spring, now with a green tree. In his essential nature he was the same, but he had many manifestations. The analogy in the case of the Virgin Mary has been pointed out by many writers. There are many Marys—Mary of Lourdes, Mary of Einsiedeln, and others—and yet it is the same Mary. So there was a Baal-peor (*Num.* 25: 3, 5), a Baal-hermon (*Judg.* 3: 3), a Baal-hazor (*II Sam.* 13: 23), and others. These Baals in time absorbed the "Els," or nature spirits, of earlier eras.

Baal, as the god of fertility, had a female counterpart, Astarte, also written Ashera and Ashtoreth, perpetuating the Ishtar of the Babylonians. The name is perpetuated in Ashteroth-

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<sup>4</sup> A. Bertholet, *A History of Hebrew Civilization*, p. 106.



karnaim (Ashtoreth of the horns) from the usual representation of the goddess with cow-horns in the little figures of her which have been recovered. Besides being worshiped under these names, she was also "Kadesh" (consecrated), from which there were quite a few place-names, so designated because they were her sanctuaries.

From early times Shechem was a center of Canaanite religious life. Its patron deity was Baal-berith, "lord of the covenant," also called El-berith, "the god of the covenant." Here was a holy place, a sacred stone, an altar and an oak, variously called "the oak of the sacred stone," or "the oak of the soothsayer," or "the oak of the lawgiver." There were many such places in the land. Both oracles and prophetic ecstasy were characteristic of Canaanite religion. At the "oak of the lawgiver" was probably issued the first Canaanite code of law. Professor A. T. Clay has shown that the antecedents of the code of Hammurabi are to be found in this western law code.<sup>6</sup>

All these and more elements of a primitive nature worship entered into the religion of the Canaanites. Theirs was the religion of an agricultural people. Their feasts centered around the several stages of the agricultural year, the celebration of which was marked by expressions of joy and praise. The first cutting of the ripe grain, the full harvest, the gathering of grapes, were all marked by a recognition of the god of fertility. It may be that the fulsome praise of that deity, coming to the ears of the Hebrews as they wandered in the wilderness, gave them the impression of the land which is reflected in their Scriptures.

### Questions

1. Give a general description of the land of Canaan.
2. By what names has the land been known?
3. What gives the land its strategic position?
4. Who were the early inhabitants of the land?
5. What peoples have left remains of their civilization?
6. Describe Canaanite civilization.
7. Describe the religion of the Canaanites.

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<sup>6</sup> A. T. Clay, *Miscellaneous Inscriptions*, 1915, No. 28.



### Topics for Further Study

#### *The Map of Canaan*

Draw an outline map of Canaan. Indicate the main divisions of the land. Locate the centers of early civilization: Shechem, Bethel, Megiddo, Kadesh, Hazor, Jerusalem, Hebron, Gaza, Beer-sheba, Mizpeh, Jericho, Beth-shean.

#### *Baalism*

Consult Bible dictionaries and A. Bertholet's *A History of Hebrew Civilization*.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE COMING OF THE HEBREWS

#### Bible Readings—

*Joshua 20: 1-9*—Hebrew Cities of Refuge

*Genesis 19: 1-8*—Hebrew Hospitality

*Exodus 6: 2-8*—Israel's Religious Inheritance

*Exodus 19: 3-6*—Israel, God's Holy Nation

Into this land of Canaan the Hebrews came as one of a succession of Semitic invasions, a band or bands of nomads from the desert. They were, as their ancestors for centuries before them had been, shepherds. They had the bedouin organization. The largest subdivision of the people was the tribe; the largest subdivision of the tribe was the clan; the clan was divided into households, each household living in a single tent. The tent was, therefore, the primary social unit. This is reflected in the story of Achan's arrest at Ai (*Josh. 7: 16-18*). First, Israel was brought forward by tribes, and the offender was found to be of the tribe of Judah. Then the clans of Judah were brought, and it was discovered that the guilty one belonged to the clan of the Zerahites. Then this clan was brought, and the household of Zabdi was taken. This reduced the search to a single tent, and Achan was found to be the guilty person.

1. *The Family.* This bedouin life has been called an aristocracy. It was that, in tribal consciousness and pride of blood. Blood relationship was the basis of social life. The family was a little kingdom in itself. All associations were thought of in terms of the family. This is evident from the wide use of family names—father, mother, son, daughter—in the description of other similar kinds of relation. The father was the supreme ruler; hence, every company of whatever sort must have a "father." A man was a "father" also of whatever he created or cared for; Jubal was "the father of all such as handle the harp and pipe," and Jabal was "the father of all such as dwell in tents and have cattle" (*Gen. 4: 20, 21*). Similarly, whatever was looked upon as the source, whether of life or counsel or care, was the "mother." Thus Deborah was a "mother in Israel" (*Judg. 5: 7*); the Hittite was the "mother" of Jerusalem (*Ezek.*

16: 3, 45). Similarly, a "son" was one who belonged to another; all the descendants of Jacob were called the "sons of Israel," while those who were joined to evil were the "sons of Belial" (*Judg.* 19: 22). So, also, a "daughter" was a tributary; villages were the "daughters" of the city; branches were the "daughters" of the vine; and the notes of music were the "daughters" of song (*Josh.* 15: 45; *Eccl.* 12: 4; *Gen.* 49: 22; cf. marginal readings). These extensions of the meaning of the word cited are proof of the central position of the family in Hebrew life.

2. *Blood Relationship and Blood Revenge.* Blood was the basis of relationship. Where, therefore, the bond of blood was lacking it was supplied artificially. "Blood brothers" were those who, desiring to enter into a covenant, opened a vein, each in the arm of the other, and licked the blood which issued forth. This type of covenant is still practiced in parts of Arabia and the Lebanon mountains.<sup>(1)</sup> That it existed also among the ancestors of Israel is evident from the verb used in the Old Testament for making a covenant; i.e., "cut" a covenant.

Next to the commingling of blood, since food was the sustenance of life, the partaking of a common meal was a means of sealing a covenant. In many Arab tribes to this day, eating together is sufficient to constitute a covenant. In this way Laban and Jacob sealed their covenant at Mizpah (*Gen.* 31: 46-49) and Israel made a covenant with the Gibeonites at Gilgal (*Josh.* 9: 14).

Since "the blood is the life," the shedding of human blood was the most heinous of crimes. "When a man's blood has been shed it is the inviolable duty of his clan to take vengeance on the murderer, or, if he cannot be found, to take vengeance on his clan by shedding blood for blood."<sup>(2)</sup> That was the law of the desert; and that it was the law of the Hebrews is evident from their naming cities of refuge in the land of Canaan. (Read *Joshua* 20: 1-9.)

3. *Bedouin Hospitality.* The wandering bedouin regarded every stranger as a guest. There is no more inviolable law in tribal life than the law of hospitality. And hospitality carries with it protection. For a stranger to enter a tent and partake of food means that he comes under the safeguarding of the

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant*, 1893, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> A. Bertholet, *A History of Hebrew Civilization*, p. 121.



owner of the tent. Merely to touch a tent rope means immunity from any injury at the hands of any member of the clan of the tent owner. The strength of this obligation is reflected in the story of Lot and his angel guests; he would sacrifice his daughters rather than violate the law of hospitality. (**Read Genesis 19: 1-8.**) Such an act as that of Jael, who lulled Sisera to sleep in her tent with a false sense of security and then slew him, was an outrage upon ancestral tribal law and could not have occurred before Israel had fallen under the wiles of the Canaanites (*Judg. 4: 17-22*).

4. *The Democracy of the Desert.* While in respect of blood bedouin tribal life was an aristocracy, in principle it was a democracy. It is true, seniority determined initial opportunity; but leadership depended upon personal qualities of wisdom and experience as well as of blood. The influence of leaders, therefore, was a matter of merit. A chief's strength was the moral strength he could inspire. His authority depended upon the approval of the tribe and continued only so long as he represented the will of the tribe. That this was true of the Hebrews at the time they entered Canaan is clear from the revolts against Moses at different stages of the wilderness journey (*Num. 16*), and from the nature of both his and Joshua's appeals to the people to be faithful to Jehovah (*Num. 17; Joshua 24*). It explains also why Israel so long resisted a king; according to Jotham's parable no true man would recognize a self-appointed king (*Judg. 9: 7-21*), and Samuel pointed out the despotism which would characterize a monarchy (*I Sam. 8: 11-18*). It was not until Solomon's day that the kingdom became hereditary. The tribal organization rested not upon authority but on common law—that is, a way of living in which the rights of all were determined by their relation to Jehovah. The prophets stood for this common law of tribal life as over against the monarchy, and, from it as a text, they preached the righteousness and brotherhood which had characterized old Israel.

5. *The Simple Life.* The life of old Israel as a group of wandering tribes was the simplest imaginable. Their main occupation and the source of their sustenance was cattle raising. They had flocks and herds, but no horses until the time of Solomon. The old Hebrew word for "wealth" originally meant "cattle." The children of Israel, as they called themselves, lived in tents, and

their habitat was determined by the water supply. The tent was made of cloth of goats' hair, usually black, and was so stretched as to resemble the primitive Hebrew letter "b," called "beth"—their word for "house." It was supported by poles, which were kept in position by ropes attached to tent pegs. The Hebrew word for "to proceed" is the same as "pull out," used of removing the pegs.

Their clothing was the skins of the flock, and later a cloak of goats' hair worn over a body-garment. The most necessary article of apparel was the turban. Sandals sufficed for the feet. The furniture of the tent was such as could be made of hides. The Hebrew word for "table" is the same as for "a stretched skin." The bedouin usually sits "tailor fashion" and sleeps on a rug or a sheepskin; hence the Hebrew word for "couch" is the same as the word for "cloak." The only article of furniture, as we speak of furniture, was the camel-chair, or saddle. A piece of leather drawn together by a string formed a bag which was slung on the camel's saddle. Water, curds, and grain were carried in such bags. The same Hebrew word means "bag" and "jug." A few vessels were made of hollowed-out gourds. Hand-mills were of stone, the simplest form being a "saddle" and "rider." "Grinding" was the desert term for administering chastisement, as "thrashing" is in agricultural countries. The lamp was a vessel for oil, with a twisted wisp of wool as a wick; the same word was used for extinguishing a light and ending life (*II Sam. 21:17*).

The chief food of nomad Israel, besides the special manna, was milk, both goat's and camel's. It was transported in a skin container, the shaking of which soon turned it to curds—better adapted for slaking thirst. The flesh of domestic animals was eaten, their slaughter being a religious ceremony. For the rest of his food the nomad depends on the locality in which he finds himself. Dates are used where the date palm flourishes. There are tribes which live almost exclusively on these and milk. Many modern nomads tarry in fertile spots long enough to secure a crop of quick-growing grain. But the ancient law of the desert, before there was money and when little could be earned by service, was

"Let them get who have the power,  
And let them keep who can."



The Midianites of Gideon's day (*Judg.* 6) did only what the desert Hebrews had themselves been compelled to do in order to survive—they took the possessions of those who stood in their way. The better way of a settled life was a part of the call to a people who had a message for the world.

6. *What the Hebrews Brought with Them.* It is not what the Hebrews had in common with other nomads that singles them out as a people, but what they had as their peculiar possession. While they were simple nomads and had been slaves in Egypt, they had in their souls an inheritance which the peoples around them did not have. That inheritance was the tradition of their fathers—the revelation God had given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and which had come afresh to Moses in the steppe of Midian (*Ex.* 3: 16), sending him back to Egypt to lead his people to the land they were afterwards to inherit. (**Read Exodus 6: 2-8.**) But they had something more. The God of their fathers had been a God of times and places, who had revealed himself in special need and in special appearances. But the God of Moses was not simply the God of Sinai—one more holy place—but he was the God of his people wherever they might dwell, and he was the God of hosts—God in the midst of them, leading them and manifesting himself in the history of the nation which was being born. He was a very terrible God, at whose presence the mountain of Sinai had shaken and burned with fire, and who could not have a rival; hence there could not be any other God for Israel, whether they were in Midian, in the wilderness, or in Canaan. He was the Eternal, with power to make his will effective. He had chosen the people of Israel and given them his *torah* (instruction) through Moses, and they had entered into a solemn Covenant with him to be his people. The Covenant was celebrated in the solemn festival of the Pass-over, commemorating their deliverance from Egypt. The badge of that Covenant was circumcision. In a word, the inheritance which the Israelites were bringing with them was their religion; it was this which was to make them the people of the one true God.

7. *Sense of Mission.* One thing more the Hebrews brought with them, and that was a sense of mission in the world. (**Read Exodus 19: 3-6.**) It was this consciousness which led them so carefully to preserve their tradition—to write their Scriptures.



They produced a historical literature, but they did not call it history. They were not interested primarily in history; they were interested in religion. They reduced their experience to writing because they were conscious of a mission. "Many a nation has come into being and passed away without our knowing anything of its history, or whether it had a history. But here is a nation—an insignificant nation—which has an interest for us quite different from that of any other nation of antiquity."<sup>(3)</sup> Our interest is in the experience which that people had and their understanding of its significance. Their Scriptures would never have been written on parchment had not that experience, of which their Scriptures are the record, first been written on their hearts. It is this experience, which God used as the medium of his revelation, of which we have the history in that series of writings which we call the Old Testament.

### Questions

1. Describe the organization of the Israelites when they came into the land of Canaan.
2. What was the place of the family in Hebrew life? How was this reflected in Hebrew speech?
3. What was the basis of relationship in bedouin life?
4. Describe bedouin hospitality.
5. How was the essential democracy of Hebrew tribal life manifested?
6. Describe the life of the Hebrews in the nomad period of their history.
7. What did the Hebrews bring with them which distinguished them from other nomads?
8. What led the Hebrews to write the records which we call the Old Testament?

### Topics for Further Study

#### *Bedouin Life and Customs*

Consult A. Bertholet's *A History of Hebrew Civilization* or E. W. Rice's *Orientalisms in Bible Lands*.

#### *What is Meant by the "Hebrew Tradition"*

Consult M. Jastrow, Jr., *Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions*, 1912.

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<sup>3</sup> B. Stade, *Geschichte des Volks Israels*.

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## CHAPTER XIX

### THE WORK OF THE PROPHETS

(Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve Minor Prophets)

#### Bible Readings—

*Isaiah 1: 1-20*—An Illustration of Isaiah's Prophecy

*Jeremiah 31: 27-34*—An Illustration of Jeremiah's Prophecy

*Ezekiel 37: 15-28*—An Illustration of Ezekiel's Prophecy

*Daniel 7: 9-14*—An Illustration of Daniel's Visions

1. *Definition.* In its widest sense, prophetism is a very old and a very widespread institution. Everywhere man has wanted to know the future and to see the unseen. In other religions the office of prophet was largely one of divination; in the religion of Israel the prophets were the spokesmen of God. Because they were so possessed by the divine spirit as to give them unusual insight into the significance of events, they were called "seers"; by virtue of their character they were called "men of God"; by virtue of their task they were called "watchmen"; because they knew but one master they were called "servants"; and because their instrument was speech they were called "messengers" and "prophets." The prophets were "mediators by speech between God and man." Prediction was only a part, and a less important part, of their work. They were *forth-tellers* rather than *fore-tellers*. "It was their work to make known the will of God and to urge men to bring their lives into harmony with that will." They were not recluses; they lived in the open and stood in the full stream of human life. They found the occasion for their message in the politics and practices of the nation. Their voices were heard and their work was done in the centers where the people lived and at the shrines where the people congregated. They were the best citizens of the land.

2. *The Earlier, or Pre-writing, Prophets.* Prophecy in the Old Testament sense—a definite message for a definite need—was an original institution with the Hebrews. As such it had its beginning with Moses (*Jer. 7: 25*). Inspired by an arresting experience, Moses led his people out of Egypt and made them



a nation, and at Sinai he organized them in a covenant, giving them the Decalogue. "The Decalogue is the most remarkable phenomenon in Israelitish life. This simple embodiment in ten words of the whole life of man, in its relations both to one another and to God, is the most wonderful thing in the history of the race. It stands like Sinai, with which it is associated, distinct, solitary, and hid in heaven; and the people and the man who gave it must ever excite our wonder and compel our veneration."<sup>(1)</sup> In the largest sense of the word this was a prophetic work.

After the settlement of the land the first national occasion of prophecy arose from contact with the Canaanites, inspiring the crude but effective work of Deborah (*Judg.* 4: 4).

The next national occasion of prophecy was the Philistine invasion in the days of Samuel. Groups of prophets now appeared, going from place to place, stirring the courage of the people by their fanatical zeal. Prior to the writing prophets, the two names of greatest importance are Samuel and Elijah. Samuel in his own day was called a seer and consulted as an oracle. He guided the destiny of the nation in giving it a king and in holding him to his divine commission. As the kingdom became stable, under David, prophecy waned; but Nathan (*II Sam.* 12:1-14) and Gad (*II Sam.* 24:11-25) were worthy successors of Samuel. It is a striking fact that no prophet is mentioned by name in Solomon's reign, though it was a prophetic voice that announced the judgment that followed after him (*I Kgs.* 11:29-38; cf. *I Kgs.* 12:22-24).

Because the prophets dealt so much with public events they are often spoken of as if they were mere politicians, but their first and chief interest was the religion of Jehovah. The zeal of these prophets for the religion of Jehovah was greater than their political wisdom. When Ahab legalized Baal worship in Israel, Elijah boldly challenged the faithlessness of king and people. His contest on Carmel is one of the most momentous scenes in history. What he said there was that two deities equally entitled to the homage of Israel did not exist. Though not less influential, his successor, Elisha, was a less heroic character, a pastor rather than a preacher, whose counsel and help were sought alike by king and peasant.

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<sup>1</sup> A. B. Davidson, *Old Testament Prophecy*, p. 75.

3. *The Later, or Writing, Prophets.* After Elijah and Elisha, the prophets, instead of dealing with individual kings and dynasties, dealt with the people as a whole. They maintained that it was not enough to exterminate Baal worship; something more was needed. Jehovah was a God of righteousness and required righteousness in the lives of those who professed his name (*Amos 5:24; Mic. 6:8*). As the keynote of prophecy became less national and more ethical, that class of prophets known as the "false" prophets arose. This name does not mean that they were intentional deceivers. They were rather self-deceived; they lived in the confidence that Jehovah would not allow the nation to be overthrown and that in a crisis he would always come to the help of Israel. Naturally they were more popular than the true prophets. It may have been the unpopularity of the true prophets—an unpopularity which developed because of their more gloomy message—that led them to resort to writing. At first they did not seem to take pains to preserve their message, though a number of them have left books, which bear their names.

The writing prophets are commonly divided into the *Major Prophets* (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel) and the *Minor Prophets* (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi). This division does not indicate either the importance or the date of the prophecies, but is due to the relative length of the books. The writing prophets have been classified in the following groups:

(1) The eighth century prophets—those who prophesied before the fall of Samaria, 722 B. C. { Amos  
Hosea  
Isaiah (1-39)  
Micah

(2) The seventh century prophets—those who prophesied before the fall of Jerusalem, 586 B. C. { Jeremiah  
Ezekiel  
Zephaniah  
Nahum  
Habakkuk



- (3) The prophets of the Exile—those who  
 Prophesied during and after the  
 Exile.\*
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| { | Ezekiel<br>Isaiah (40-66)<br>Haggai<br>Zechariah<br>Malachi |
|---|---|

\* Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, and Daniel are included in this period also. It is impossible with our present knowledge to give the exact date of these prophecies.

4. *The Eighth Century Prophets.* The four eighth century prophets labored in an era of material prosperity. The crushing of Damascus by Assyria in 803 B. C. and the apathy of Egypt had given Israel and Judah an opportunity to develop economically. Commerce flourished and wealth multiplied. There was a marked development of city life, with its luxury and ease. The rich became richer, and the poor became poorer. Injustice and oppression were flagrant. Religious ceremonies were attended with orgies. The Mosaic conception of God as a God of righteousness was forgotten.

About the middle of the century, Amos arraigned the Northern Kingdom for its shameful life, while a little later HOSEA poured out his heart over the nation's unfaithfulness to Jehovah. Amos' prophecy is to be studied as a bill of indictment in which the nation's iniquity is laid bare with biting sarcasm. Hosea's prophecy, while couched in tenderer terms, uncovers a worse state in the nation's life, a people in decay, for whose recovery there is no hope, but whose God cannot give them up.

Towards the close of the century the scene of prophecy shifted to the Southern Kingdom. ISAIAH began his ministry in Judah shortly after Hosea pleaded in vain with Israel in the north. His call came to him in the year in which King Uzziah died, probably 740 B. C., and he was still prophesying at the end of the century. His was one of the critical periods in Hebrew history. He witnessed four great crises in his nation's history: (1) the invasion by Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus, 734-732 B. C.; (2) the capture and downfall of Israel by the Assyrians under Shalmaneser IV, 722-721 B. C.; (3) the siege of Ashdod by Sargon II, 711 B. C.; (4) the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib, 701 B. C. In all these crises Isaiah was the most potent personality in the Southern Kingdom. He was eloquent and fearless, and he became the divine spokesman of



his time. The book bearing his name (*Isaiah 1-39*) contains the sermons by which he strove to direct people and kings. (**Read by way of illustration, Isaiah 1:1-20.**) Isaiah succeeded in saving Judah. His younger contemporary, MICAH, did in the hill-country of Judah what Isaiah was doing in Jerusalem.

5. *The Seventh Century Prophets.* It was nearly a century after Micah before the voice of a prophet was heard again. Then in succession we have Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk. These prophets had the same task in Judah that Hosea had in Israel—that of saving the religion of their people in the collapse of the nation. The nation had destroyed itself by profligacy. The people would lose their land. Would they also lose their God?

JEREMIAH saw that religion was not dependent on outward institutions. The political situation had so changed that there was no more room for a merely national religion. The map of the world was about to be recast. Judah had failed to comprehend Isaiah's message. The deliverance in the days of Hezekiah had put a new premium on Jerusalem and the Temple, and Josiah's reformation was used by the scribes and the priests to support their own claims. It was Jeremiah's task to condemn the results of his people's religious reformation; what they needed was not reformation but regeneration. This brought down upon him the wrath of the king and of the priesthood, and he was scourged and imprisoned. Imprisonment and threats of death, however, did not move him; but the sense of his failure as a preacher and his impotence to save his nation made him "the weeping prophet." It seemed as if he stood alone in his loyalty to Jehovah; and in the throes of that bitter experience his new message was born. Jeremiah maintained that the unit of true religion was the individual. A new people should bear Jehovah's name, but they should be gathered, not by the possession of common institutions, but by the possession of a common spirit. Jehovah's new covenant would be written upon the individual heart. (**Read Jeremiah 31:27-34.**) This is Jeremiah's supreme contribution to the work of the prophets; and he sealed his message with personal suffering which has led to his being called the greatest of the prophets and "likest Christ." The book *Jeremiah* is a combination of sermons, soliloquies, a letter, history, and oracles.

The prophecy of ZEPHANIAH is a blast of doom upon Judah and Jerusalem; G. A. Smith says of it: "There is no hotter book in the Old Testament." The theme of NAHUM is the fate of Nineveh. HABAKKUK deals with Jehovah's use of Nebuchadnezzar as his hammer to break the nations; the prophet could not understand how Jehovah could use such a wicked power as his instrument. The answer which the prophet received is the great truth upon which the life of nations, as of men, depends, "Behold the righteous shall live by his faithfulness" (*Hab. 2:4*). The Chaldeans were already riding to their fall; the righteous would survive them.

6. *The Prophets of the Exile.* The prophecy of OBADIAH is one of the books which give no clue to their date. The prophet announces the doom of "Edom." Since *Jeremiah 49:7-22* contains the most of *Obadiah 1:1-9* in an expanded form, it would seem as if there had been an old prophecy against Edom, and that Obadiah, when the Edomites taunted the people of Judah because of the fall of Jerusalem (586 B. C.), recalled and emphasized it as a warning to all nations.

Among the "ten thousand" citizens of Judah who were deported to Babylon in 597 B. C. was EZEKIEL, a young man of a priestly family. In his thirtieth year he became a prophet to the exiles. The book bearing his name shows that there were two distinct periods of his prophetic activity. In the first period he gave himself to disillusioning his brethren with regard to an early return to Jerusalem. Jerusalem must be destroyed. Nothing could stay the divine judgment since the Holy City had proved itself unfaithful to Jehovah. From the very day of its election, Judah had been untrue, giving itself over to idolatry, immorality, and the profanation of the sacred institutions of Jehovah. The devouring fire would consume, and the sharp sword of Nebuchadnezzar would be drawn (*Ezek. 20-23*). The besieged city was at length captured and, like the prophet's wife, perished unmourned (*Ezek. 24*). The fall of Jerusalem wrought a change in the attitude of the people toward Ezekiel. Prior to that they had been murmuring that they were being punished for the sins of their fathers, notwithstanding Ezekiel's insistence on individual responsibility (*Ezek. 18*). After the fall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel's message was one of consolation, and the people came to trust him. He had a definite program of



reconstruction which insured a better Jerusalem than the city that had perished.

Ezekiel's prophecy is unique in that he uses dramatic spectacle and vision to convey his ideas. It is the forerunner of the pageant. Even his teaching concerning the holiness of God is conveyed in bizarre symbolism (*Ezek. 1*). He enacts as well as pictures his messages; for example, he eats the roll to describe his inspiration (*Ezek. 3:3*); he sketches the siege of Jerusalem by means of a map on a tile and a pantomimic attack (*Ezek. 4:1, 2*); he lies on his left side 390 (Septuagint, 190) days, symbolic of Israel's captivity, and on his right side 40 days, symbolic of Judah's (*Ezek. 4:4-6*); he cuts off his hair and disposes of it in thirds, to describe the thorough destruction of Jerusalem (*Ezek. 5*); he joins two sticks to represent the reunion of Israel. (**Read Ezekiel 37:15-28.**) Similarly, he describes the resurrection of Judah (*Ezek. 37*) and her restoration (*Ezek. 40 ff.*). Ezekiel's method was determined by his Babylonian environment, which abounded in arts, and by his objective—the organization of a church out of the wreck of the nation. Ezekiel saw the value of religious institutions; he saw the value of the Temple as a rallying-point, of ritual as something that would help to make religion effective in the world, of laws as a power to make men strong. It was Ezekiel's emphasis upon these that helped Israel through two great crises: (1) the destruction of Jerusalem, and (2) the conquests of Alexander the Great. In the first crisis, when it would have been natural for Israel to have reasoned that her God had forsaken her, Ezekiel moralized and universalized the conception of Jehovah, and by offering a positive program saved the remnant of the nation from apostasy. In the second, when every other religion in southwestern Asia was yielding to Greek naturalism, the legalism of Ezekiel held Israel fast.

In the Revised Version of the Bible there is a space between *Isaiah 39* and *Isaiah 40*. Whoever wrote the last twenty-seven chapters of *Isaiah*, it is generally admitted that we have in these chapters a new situation and a new message. We are in the midst of a captive people and we are listening to a voice of hope. The very first words of the SECOND ISAIAH are, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people" (*Isa. 40:1*), for, says Jehovah, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions . . . and I will



not remember thy sins" (*Isa.* 43: 25; 44: 22). The message of hope was a return from exile, a deliverance which would exceed the marvels of the exodus from Egypt (*Isa.* 43: 16-21). The way was opened. Jehovah had raised up Cyrus, who would issue his decree of liberation. Would captive Israel respond? The prophet's task was to rally a torpid and disillusioned people. These exiles had already grounded their faith in commercialism. They had prospered in Babylon and were intoxicated with the new experience of acquiring wealth. To awaken in them a desire to return to Palestine was the Second Isaiah's problem. To this end he plied them with arguments. He carried them back to the cradle of their history and bade them remember whose hand had taught them to walk. He conjured with the names of Abraham and Jacob, seeking to awaken dormant loyalties. He upbraided them for their stubbornness and tempted them with pictures of a restored Zion. Then, as a climax, he pictured their mission, in the four passages known as the four "Servant Songs" (*Isa.* 42: 1-4; 49: 1-6; 50: 4-11; 52: 13—53: 12), culminating in the great Messianic prophecy of the Suffering Servant. The message of hope was addressed first to Israel, but the blessings of the new age were not to be limited to it. The ends of the earth were to share in them (*Isa.* 45: 22). It is a prophetic picture of the redemption of humanity; hence Second Isaiah has also been called the "Prophet of Universalism."

7. *The Prophets after the Exile.* Prophecy slumbered until the year 520 B. C. Forty-two thousand Israelites (*Ezra* 2: 64, 65) had returned to Jerusalem under Sheshbazzar in the year 536 B. C., by the permission of Cyrus, as the Second Isaiah had predicted (*Isa.* 44: 28). The decree of Cyrus had said: "Jehovah, the God of heaven, hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem. Whosoever there is among you of all his people, his God will be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and build the house of Jehovah the God of Israel (he is God), which is in Jerusalem." The work was begun at once and made some progress (*Ezra* 3). But the hostility of the Samaritans reached the Persian court and under Cambyses the work was prohibited. It was not until Darius Hystaspes came to the throne that the royal permission was restored. Meanwhile the prophet HAGGAI saw his fellow-countrymen busy about their own fortunes,

and faithless to the commission with which Cyrus had sent them back to Palestine. It was in response to his rebukes and exhortations, addressed now to the people and now to Zerubbabel, in four messages (*Hag. 1:1-11; 1:12-15; 2:1-9; 2:10-19*), that the work was resumed and brought to completion in 515 B. C. The teachings of Haggai are practical: (1) in a well-ordered community, God's house is central; (2) difficult tasks should be faced at once—inaction is contagious; (3) decrying one's own generation is a poor excuse for inaction; (4) material prosperity does not always attend true religion.

The foundation of the new Temple had been laid, but as yet there was no superstructure (*Zech. 1:16*); the altar of burnt offering had been set up, but no priest worthy to officiate had been found. In a series of visions interpreted by an angel—a new type of prophecy which grew out of the Exile—ZECHARIAH brought encouragement to Zerubbabel, the prince, and to Joshua, the priest. The keynote of Zechariah's prophecy is: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith Jehovah" (*Zech. 4:6*). Few books of the Bible are more difficult, but few are more Messianic. Zechariah predicted the coming of the King of Zion (*Zech. 9:9*), which had fulfillment in a Palm Sunday entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem (*Mt. 21:5*); and the selling of the Shepherd for thirty pieces of silver (*Zech. 11:12, 13; cf. Mt. 27:9*).

The Temple was completed in March, 515 B. C. It did not compare in splendor with the Temple of Solomon. Worship had become half-hearted; even the priests were guilty of presenting inferior offerings. MALACHI challenged the perplexed and disappointed people by presenting God's side of the situation and by predicting the coming of One who would purify his Temple. Malachi abounds in Messianic predictions (*Mal. 3:1; 4:1, 2*).

JOEL was a prophet of Judah, and his home was in Jerusalem or its vicinity. There is no clue to his date. His prophecy was occasioned by a severe visitation of drought and locusts, which led him to deliver two highly pictorial discourses (*Joel 1, 2*), calling for repentance. The plague was removed (*Joel 2:18-27*); and this led to the prediction that "afterward" the Spirit would be poured out on all flesh (*Joel 2:28, 29*), and that, with signs in heaven and on earth, there would come the great and terrible "day of the Lord."



JONAH is identical with the prophet described in *II Kings 14: 25*. He lived in the reign of Jeroboam II. The book *Jonah* is the story of the mission of that prophet to Nineveh, the way in which he tried to escape it, and the way in which he fulfilled it. In many respects it is "the most Christian" book of the Old Testament, the writer's object being to proclaim the universal character of God's love, and to show that it was not limited to Israel alone, but extended even to the heathen, if they would abandon their evil ways and turn in penitence to him.

In the Hebrew Bible the book DANIEL is not placed among "the Prophets" but in "the Writings." It is a piece of apocalyptic literature. Apocalypse deals solely with the future, whereas prophecy, no matter how full of prediction, has its foundation in the present. There are apocalyptic elements in all the writing prophets (e.g., *Ezek. 38, 39*). In the days in which *Daniel* was written the hopes of the Jews were centered in a future, the assurance of which was to be found in the purposes and power of God as shown in the great crisis of the captivity in which Daniel figured. The outstanding teaching of the book is the ultimate triumph of the kingdom of God. (**Read Daniel 7: 9-14.**) In the scope of its materials and the sweep of its faith it is the most advanced book in the Old Testament.

### Questions

1. Give a definition of Old Testament prophecy.
2. Name the outstanding pre-writing prophets.
3. In what respects did the writing prophets differ from the pre-writing prophets?
4. How are the writing prophets classified: (1) as to the length of their books; (2) as to date?
5. What can you tell about the prophetic work of Amos and Hosea? of Isaiah and Micah?
6. What was the mission of Jeremiah and his contemporaries, Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk?
7. What was Jeremiah's contribution to prophecy?
8. What are the characteristics of Ezekiel, and what great service did he render to religion and to his people?
9. Describe the prophetic work of the Second Isaiah.
10. What is the message of Haggai? of Zechariah? of Malachi?



11. What is meant by "*Daniel* is a piece of apocalyptic literature"?

12. Do you think God has prophetic characters interpreting his mind for our time? State your reasons for your conviction.

### Topics for Further Study

#### *The Prophetic Call*

Make a study of the call of each of the Major and Minor Prophets. Endeavor to discover in each case how the call came and the nature of the mission on which the prophet was sent.

#### *A Detailed Study of One of the Prophets*

Select one of the prophetic books for more detailed study. Read the book carefully, using a commentary to clarify the meaning of obscure passages. Find out all you can about the prophet—his background, his character, his life, his purpose, his message. A Bible dictionary will prove helpful, as will also the books in the bibliography, listed below.

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## CHAPTER XX

### THE WORK OF THE SINGERS AND THE WISE MEN

(*Lamentations, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*)

#### Bible Readings—

*Psalms* 8, 106, 80, 24, 42—Typical Psalms

*Proverbs* 22: 1-12—Typical Proverbs

*Job* 29: 1—30: 31—A Typical Selection from *Job*

*Ecclesiastes* 1: 1-11; 12: 8-14—Typical Thoughts of the Debater

*Song of Solomon* 2: 8-17—A Typical Passage from This Song of Love

1. *The Poetry of the Bible.* Much more of the Bible is poetry than one would learn from the Authorized Version. The printing of this version does not show what is poetry and what is not. One of the advantages of the Revised Version is that this difference is clearly indicated. Most of the poetry of the Bible is found in the Old Testament.

Poetry is a primitive form of expression. It grows out of the rhythm of motion in group singing. Primitive peoples invariably are singers; song is a natural human instinct. In order to keep in unison, visible or audible rhythm was resorted to. The earliest poetry is found in folk songs connected with communal occupations; for example, vintage songs (*Isa.* 5), well-digging songs (*Num.* 21: 17, 18), sword songs (*Gen.* 4: 23, 24), battle songs (*Josh.* 10: 12, 13). Individual tribes may have had their songs; thus *Genesis* 49 may be a composite of tribal songs. The dirge also was a very early form of poetry. "It will be evident from such survivals of the old folk poetry of Israel how simply and naturally the secular then passed into the sphere of religion."<sup>1</sup> The battle song easily passed into a prayer to Jehovah:

"Arise, Jehovah!

And let thine enemies be scattered;

Let all that hate thee flee" (*Num.* 10: 35);

and when victory was won:

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<sup>1</sup> A. R. Gordon, *The Poets of the Old Testament*, 1912, p. 47.

“Rest thou, Jehovah!

And bless the myriads of the tribes of Israel” (*Num. 10: 36*).

When events came to be celebrated, the lyric poem was developed. Of such are the song of Hannah (*I Sam. 2: 1-10*), the “Song of the Bow” (*II Sam. 1: 17-27*), and most of the Psalms. Lyric poetry is the delineation of emotion in song. One other kind of poetry is common in the Old Testament; it is called “gnomic,” and consists of “observations on human life and society, or generalizations on conduct and character.” The poetry of *Proverbs* is of this class. *Job* and the *Song of Solomon* are dramatic poetry.

Hebrew poetry is not in the form of rhyme or even of meter, as we know them, but of parallelism; that is, “after a statement has been made in the first line of the verse it is repeated, enlarged, or balanced by the following line or lines.” The second number of the parallelism is a sort of echo of the first. “It is,” says Dr. Gordon, “as though the father spoke to his son, and the mother repeated his words, or, as if lovers were talking in a real interchange of hearts.” Several kinds of parallelism have been pointed out: (1) synonymous parallelism (*Ps. 1: 2*); (2) antithetic parallelism (*Prov. 10: 1*); (3) synthetic, or constructive, parallelism (*Ps. 2: 6*); (4) climacteric parallelism (*Ps. 39: 1*).

2. *The Devotional Books.* As religion was the main occupation of the Hebrews, their poetry is chiefly religious. In this respect it is unique. The Hebrew saint pours out his soul to Jehovah. The relation between God and his people is as tender as that between lovers. Two books are composed entirely of these lyrics: *Lamentations* and *Psalms*.

*Lamentations.* In the English Bible this book is placed after *Jeremiah* because of the tradition that Jeremiah was the author of it. In the Hebrew Bible it belongs to the third division, the Writings, and was one of the *Megilloth*, or rolls, which were read in the synagogues at certain sacred seasons—the *Song of Solomon*, at the Passover; *Ruth*, at Pentecost; *Lamentations*, on the ninth of Ab (June-July), commemorating the fall of Jerusalem, 586 B. C.; *Ecclesiastes*, at the Feast of Tabernacles; and



*Esther*, at the Feast of Purim. *Lamentations* is divided into five chapters, each containing a single complete poem. Three of these are dirges. They all have to do with the destruction of Jerusalem and were written soon after that tragic event.

*The Psalms.* This book is a collection of Hebrew devotional poetry. It has been called "the hymn-book of the second Temple." Many of the Psalms were, no doubt, used in public worship. "But," says Kirkpatrick, "it does not have the appearance of a collection of hymns made exclusively for public worship." Like many of our hymnals, it grew into its present form. Because it is a collection of devotional literature, it has aptly been called "the heart of the Bible"; "for," says Dr. Gordon, "what the heart is in man—the welling fountain of his feelings and imaginations, his joys and griefs, and manifold cravings and aspirations—the Psalter is in the Bible." And Luther says of the Psalms: "In these, thou mayest gaze into the heart of all saints, as into lovely pleasure gardens . . . and see how fine, pleasant, delightful flowers spring up therein from all manner of beautiful, gladsome thoughts of God." It is a striking fact that of all the quotations in the New Testament taken from the Old, nearly one-half are from the Psalter.

There are one hundred and fifty Psalms in the collection, divided into five books. Each book ends with a doxology, and *Psalms 150* is the doxology of the entire collection. The Psalter is divided as follows:

- Book I—*Psalms 1-41*
- Book II—*Psalms 42-72*
- Book III—*Psalms 73-89*
- Book IV—*Psalms 90-106*
- Book V—*Psalms 107-150*

Of the 150 Psalms, 100 are assigned by inscriptions to authors as follows: David, the sons of Korah, Asaph, Solomon, Ethan, Moses. These inscriptions were not a part of the original text, and we cannot determine authorship from them; but they represent a very ancient tradition.

Many helpful classifications of the Psalms have been made, but none is entirely satisfactory. The reason for this is, we find different elements in the same Psalm. The following classifica-

tion according to their general content will be found to be fairly comprehensive:

*Psalms in Praise of God's Works in Life and Nature.* To the Hebrew mind the relation between God and the world is immediate. There are many Psalms which we should call hymns of general praise. Such are 8, 19, 33, 36, 65, 66, 92, 103, 104, 107, 134-136, 144-147.

*Historical Psalms.* These extol God's ways in history. Such are 18, 82, 93, 97, 105, 106.

*National Psalms.* These may be called hymns in praise of God's dealing with Israel as a nation. Such are 45, 60, 73, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85, 94, 102, 108, 110, 129, 132.

*Liturgical Psalms.* These were used in connection with public sacrifice and worship. Such are 3, 4, 5, 6, 16, 20, 21, 24, 30, 61, 65, 67, 84, 111-118 (Hallel Psalms), 120-134 (Pilgrim Psalms).

*Psalms of the Religious Life.* These are Psalms reflecting the personal condition, needs, or desires of the psalmist, sometimes speaking not for himself alone but as the representative of the community. Such are 13, 16, 17, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 35, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 51, 54-57, 59, 61, 62, 63, 70, 71, 86, 88, 91, 109, 138, 139, 140-142.

**(Read one Psalm from each class: 8, 106, 80, 24, 42.)**

The Psalm book is unlike any other book in the Old Testament in the elements of universality and timelessness. It meets more of our needs than any other book; we have more in common with its ideas than with any other book. As Davison says: "The personal elements which the Psalms contain are soon lost in the impersonal, the local in the general, the finite in the infinite. . . . The psalmist, of all men, is alone with God and his own soul."<sup>2</sup> "The Psalms seem to me," says Athanasius, "to be a kind of mirror for everyone who sings them, in which he

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<sup>2</sup> W. T. Davison, *The Praises of Israel*.

may observe the motions of the soul, and, as he observes them, give utterance to them in words.”<sup>(3)</sup>

3. *Wisdom Literature.* Philosophy in the modern sense had no existence among the Hebrews. Speculation in pursuit of abstract truth was foreign to their way of thinking. No Old Testament writer thought of presenting arguments for the existence of God. “Two fixed points were universally assumed by the Hebrew thinkers,” says Eiselen: “(1) the existence of a personal God; (2) the reality of a divine revelation.”<sup>(4)</sup> The Hebrew mind was practical, interested in applying truth to life. To this end three kinds of literature were developed: legalistic, prophetic, and wisdom. The legalist laid down the prospectus of the devout life; the prophet arraigned the breach of it; while the wise man pointed out the profit of following it. In all nations the earliest reflections on the phenomena of life find expression in popular proverbs, or parables, or fables. In the beginning the movement was without religious content or significance, but in time it extended to the sphere of religion. Beginning with simple observations on the wisdom of the religious way of life, the wisdom literature finally developed into the “problem book.” The Old Testament has specimens of both.

*Proverbs.* The unit of wisdom literature is the “proverb,” the Hebrew original of which comes from a word meaning “to be like.” The proverb is the primitive parable, “an enunciation of truth self-evident and self-illustrative, in concentrated form, calculated to arrest attention and fix itself in the memory.” The first proverbs were spontaneous. Then, as early as David’s day, they began to be quoted (*I Sam.* 24:13), and, by the time of Solomon, they began to be gathered in groups. *Proverbs* is such a collection. It is in eight parts, of unequal length. The heading is *Proverbs* 1:1-6. The groups are:

- (1) *Proverbs* 1:7—9:18—In Praise of Wisdom;
- (2) *Proverbs* 10:1—22:16—Proverbs of Solomon;
- (3) *Proverbs* 22:17—24:22—Words of the Wise;
- (4) *Proverbs* 24:23-34—An Appendix to the Foregoing;
- (5) *Proverbs* 25:1—29:27—Proverbs of Solomon Which the  
Men of Hezekiah Copied Out;

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted from *The Praises of Israel*.

<sup>4</sup> F. C. Eiselen, *The Worker and His Bible*, 1909, p. 111.



- (6) *Proverbs 30: 1-33*—The Words of Agur;
- (7) *Proverbs 31: 1-9*—The Words of Lemuel;
- (8) *Proverbs 31: 10-31*—An Acrostic Eulogy of the Virtuous Housewife.

These groups are easily marked, but there is no clue in the book as to when they were united in one collection. Like the Psalter the collection grew, beginning probably with Solomon, whose reputation for wisdom was well established (*1 Kings 4: 30-34; 10: 1-9*). There is no good reason to doubt that proverbs inspired by Solomon formed the nucleus of the book (*Prov. 10: 1—22: 16*), though not put in literary form until the days of Hezekiah, while the introduction on "Wisdom" and the acrostic may be as late as the third century.

What is more important is the permanent religious value of *Proverbs*. Religion is a matter of both truth and life, of both faith and practice. The two go together, though they receive different emphases at different times. In the formative period of a people the legalist and the prophet are needed; in established days the wise man is needed. The wise man puts the emphasis on practice—the most difficult part of religion at any time. (Read *Proverbs 22: 1-12*.) "Since the Hebrew sages," says Eesterley, "regarded wisdom as essentially religious (*Prov. 1: 7*), indeed as an attribute of God himself (*Prov. 8: 22-31*), and since, in consequence, every form of wisdom, according to them, . . . had a religious content of some kind, it is evident that . . . *all* they wrote about wisdom was to be regarded as religious. To act wisely is to act in accordance with the divine will; nay, the very object of acting wisely is that God's will may be done; thus it is true to say that from the sages' point of view worldly wisdom is piety."<sup>5</sup> Or, as Davison puts it, "For the writers of *Proverbs* religion means strength and manliness and success, religion means a well-furnished intellect employing the best means to accomplish the highest ends. There is a healthy, vigorous tone about this kind of teaching which is never out of date."<sup>6</sup>

*Job*. The next step in the development of wisdom literature is the "problem book." Why do the righteous suffer? That is

<sup>5</sup> W. E. Eesterley, *The Book of Proverbs*.

<sup>6</sup> W. T. Davison, *The Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament*.

the problem of the book of *Job*, and it is the enigma of life. Philosophy, science, poetry, and religion, all have asked this question, and continue to ask it. Happily we do not wrestle with it as a new problem. It is as old as *Job* itself. This book is built upon an old story of *Job*, a devout man who suffered as few mortals are called upon to suffer. "The afflictions of *Job*" were proverbial. Stripped of his possessions, bereft of his family, smitten with a loathsome disease, regarded as a sinner by those near and dear to him, his case presented the enigma of a righteous man suffering like a great sinner. "By means of a daring prologue in heaven," says Strahan, "the poet claims the divine sanction for his own view that the suffering of the righteous man is not the punishment of sin but the trial of faith."<sup>1</sup> *Job* at first bears his trials with great patience; but, having no other knowledge of life than of the doctrine of rewards and punishments, and no consciousness of wrongdoing, he is driven to the agonizing conclusion that God is unjust. (**Read *Job* 29: 1—30: 31.**) The three friends of *Job* represent the religious community. Their natural pity is chilled by their inherited creed, and so they rebuke *Job* for his complaints and insist that his sufferings are punishment for unconfessed sin. Their confidence in their contention is marked by the fact that three times in turn they take up the argument. *Job* does not deny the principle for which they contend; he only denies its application to his own case in proportion to his suffering. Then Elihu appears, to contend that God is the greater Trainer of men (*Job* 36: 9-23). *Job* is unconvinced until the God of heaven appears, when he humbles himself in the very dust, because his God has heard his cry.

The analysis of the book is:

|                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Prologue (in prose).....       | <i>Job</i> 1, 2  |
| First Cycle of Addresses.....  | <i>Job</i> 3-14  |
| Second Cycle of Addresses..... | <i>Job</i> 15-21 |
| Third Cycle of Addresses.....  | <i>Job</i> 22-31 |
| Argument of Elihu.....         | <i>Job</i> 32-37 |
| Jehovah Speaks .....           | <i>Job</i> 38-41 |
| Epilogue (in prose).....       | <i>Job</i> 42    |

This is one of the great books of all literature, celebrating the struggle of Israel's faith through the misfortunes which befell

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<sup>1</sup> J. Strahan, *The Book of Job*, p. 9.







4. What is *Psalms*? What are its divisions?
5. What is the secret of the appeal made by the Psalm book?
6. What is "wisdom literature"? What Old Testament books are in this class of literature?
7. Give the contents of *Proverbs*.
8. What is the central problem of the book of *Job*?
9. What is the significance of *Ecclesiastes*?
10. Give the purport of the *Song of Solomon*.

### Topics for Further Study

#### *The Psalms and Your Own Life*

Make a list of the Psalms which have influenced your own life and state the reasons for the particular influence of each.

#### *The Value of Proverbs for Modern Life*

Study *Proverbs* carefully, noting particularly its teachings on such modern problems as education, industry, wealth, government, justice, sex. Formulate the general principles underlying the wise man's teachings on these subjects. Of what value are these principles today?

#### *The Christian Answer to the Problem of Job*

Read M. Devine's *The Story of Job*.

#### *The Song of Solomon and Present-day Ideas concerning Marriage*

Study the poem. What is its conception of love, courtship, marriage, temptation, faithfulness? Are there any truths here which need emphasis in modern life?

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## CHAPTER XXI

# THE OLD TESTAMENT AND ARCHÆOLOGY

### Bible Readings—

Look up all *Bible passages* referred to in this chapter.

1. *The Beginnings of Archæology.* It was not until the nineteenth century that there was a really scientific study of the Old Testament. Hebrew history did not have a place in the realm of science until we had contemporary records and objects with which to compare it. When the nineteenth century began we had few inscriptions from Egypt or Mesopotamia, and we could not read what we had.

In 1802, a Swedish orientalist, Akerblad, succeeded in deciphering a few words of the text of the Rosetta stone which had been discovered when Napoleon's army invaded Egypt in 1798. This stone had been set up by some priests in 200 B. C. and was inscribed with three kinds of writing, hieroglyphic (Egyptian picture writing), demotic (Egyptian cursive writing), and Greek. It was not until 1822 that a French scholar, Champoleon, who devoted his life to the deciphering of unknown tongues, published a translation of it. Champoleon's work was the key which unlocked the treasures of Egyptian literature.

The key to the Assyrian-Babylonian cuneiform (wedge-shaped) writing was the inscription of Darius, discovered on the rock of Behistun in Persia. This inscription was in three languages—Persian, Susian, and Babylonian. To copy this inscription, Sir Henry Rawlinson, then a British officer in Persia, in 1842 climbed the 500 feet from the plain below. He published his translation in 1846, and his work opened up the vast treasures which were later found all through Mesopotamia.

2. *Excavation.* The lure of the archæologist is the "tell," or mound. Ancient cities were built without excavation, and when they were destroyed the debris was allowed to remain. When a new city was built, the ruins of the old were leveled, and the buildings were erected on the new level thus made. Each successive city was higher than the last, and the ruins of the whole finally formed a mound. These mounds are sometimes quite



high. The mounds of great cities like Nineveh and Babylon are quite extensive. It was among these that excavation may be said to have begun. The excavations which are now in progress in Palestine are in the mounds of Amorite and Canaanite cities.

3. *Early Recoveries.* The first recoveries were made at Nineveh by the Frenchman M. Botta and the Englishman Henry Layard. The latter sent the celebrated Black Obelisk to the British Museum in 1846, the inscription on which proved to be of the annals of Shalmaneser II (860-825 B. C.), translated simultaneously in 1850 by Sir Henry Rawlinson and Edward Hinks, an Irish scholar. The inscription contained the words:

Tribute of Jehu, of the house of Humri, silver, gold, a golden ladle, golden goblets, golden pitchers, lead, a staff for the hand of the king, [and] bdellium I received.

In 1852 Hinks read the name of Menahem of Samaria as paying tribute, in the eighth year of his reign, to Tiglath-pileser IV; and in 1853 Rawlinson found a list of tributary kings, including Rezin of Damascus, Menahem of Samaria, and Hiram of Tyre. Other inscriptions include the names of Hoshea and Pekah. In the annals of Sargon II (702-705 B. C.) we read:

The city of Damascus I besieged, I took . . . 27,290 of its inhabitants I carried into captivity . . . peoples from other lands, my captives, I settled there.

The famous inscription of Sennacherib (705-681 B. C.) includes the well-known reference to Hezekiah:

And Hezekiah of Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke, 46 of his cities I captured. . . . Himself as a bird in a cage in Jerusalem, his royal city, I shut up.

4. *The Moabite Stone.* The next valuable discovery came in the year 1868, when a German missionary in the service of the Church of England discovered at Dibon, east of the Dead Sea, in the territory of ancient Moab, a large slab of black basalt bearing an inscription in Phœnician characters which con-

tained King Mesha's account of what is referred to in *II Kings* 3: 4, 5. Both Omri and his son are referred to.

5. *The Siloam Inscription.* In 1880, in the conduit constructed by Hezekiah to convey the water of the Virgin's Fountain within the city walls, a lad found the famous Siloam inscription, in script similar to that of the Moabite stone, which verifies *II Kings* 20: 20, *II Chronicles* 32: 30, and *Isaiah* 8: 6. The inscription tells how the work was carried out; namely, by simultaneous borings from both ends, which met, as in the construction of modern tunnels. These inscriptions and the calendar recovered from Gezer are among the oldest extant examples of old Hebrew writing.

6. *Assyrian Epics.* In 1872, George Smith, of the British Museum, announced that he had found among the tablets of the library of Ashurbanipal some fragments which manifestly contained parallels to the Biblical story of the Deluge. He was sent to Nineveh by the "Daily Telegraph," and, in the same room in the king's palace in which the previous fragments had been discovered, a new fragment which fitted into the previous ones was found. Not long afterwards he discovered parts of the Babylonian creation story. These discoveries have thrown new light upon *Genesis*.

7. *The Tell el-Amarna Tablets.* One of the most illuminating discoveries in the history of Biblical archæology was that of the Tell el-Amarna tablets, which take their name from the modern Arab village about 170 miles south of Cairo, the site of the capital built by Amenhotep IV. In 1887, some peasants, while digging there, came upon a chamber containing several hundred clay tablets in the cuneiform characters of Babylonia. Some were carried in sacks to Luxor, where they were hawked about among the dealers there, and these were largely broken or defaced. About 290, however, were saved, and these are to be found in the British Museum, the Royal Museum of Berlin, and the Louvre. In translation they make a book of about 200 pages. They proved to be a part of the official correspondence of the royal palace. In general they show that about 1400 B. C. Palestine was an Egyptian province, and that at that time the tributary kings were threatened by the Hittites on the north and the Habiri on the east. These letters have confirmed the



names of a large number of places mentioned in *Joshua* and *Judges*, especially the name of Jerusalem.

8. *The Code of Hammurabi*. In 1901 the Frenchman de Morgan, excavating at Susa, discovered a large block of black diorite with a bas-relief representing Hammurabi—probably the Amraphel of *Genesis* 14:1—receiving a code of laws from Shamesh the sun-god. The laws themselves were inscribed upon its front and sides. About one-eighth of the code had been erased. What remains includes 248 enactments on a variety of subjects—laws relating to property, the duties and privileges of royal servants and other officials, the tenure, rent, and cultivation of the land, trade, commerce, and family laws (including, e.g., the rights of wife and children, divorce, inheritance, adoption), criminal laws, and laws fixing wages and compensation. The fees of physicians were fixed and penalties provided for unskillful treatment. If the patient died or lost his eyesight, the doctor's hand was to be cut off. If a slave died, the doctor had to give another slave to the owner. Builders were liable for any fatality which occurred for faulty construction. If the son of an owner was killed, the son of the builder was put to death; if a slave, the builder was compelled to give another slave. This is the principle which lies back of *Exodus* 21-23. The discovery of the code of Hammurabi opened the door to an understanding of Semitic common law. Penalty and restitution are the foundation of it. In the commercial civilization of Babylonia, the chief interest was financial; in the Hebrew code the chief interest was human.

9. *Ur of the Chaldees*. Another recovery outside of Palestine which throws light on the earlier chapters of *Genesis* as well as the last of *II Kings* is that of Ur of the Chaldees, by the University of Pennsylvania and the British Museum under the directorship of C. Leonard Woolley, which has been going on since 1927. Evidence of a pre-Sumerian civilization was brought to light, as well as of a high degree of civilization as early as 3500 B. C. The marks of a flood in the late stone age were recovered, also royal tombs of the fourth millenium B. C. rivaling that of Tutankhamen, also the ziggurat, or temple, of the moon-god of Ur, many dwellings of Abraham's period, and the temple of Nebuchadnezzar.

10. *Beginnings of Palestinian Archæology*. Our interest as



Bible students centers in excavations in Palestine. We Americans may take pride in the fact that scientific research in Palestine had its inspiration in the pioneer work of Dr. Edward Robinson, the son of a Connecticut clergyman, who, in 1838, before assuming his duties as professor in Union Seminary, New York, made a tent tour of Palestine with Dr. Eli Smith of Beirut, and whose *Researches*, published simultaneously in Germany and in America, laid the foundations of Biblical geography. About 400 sites of western Palestine were identified. Robinson and Smith made their tour with the Bible as their guidebook. The work done by Robinson led to the organization of the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1865, which immediately set to work to make a survey of Jerusalem and later (1871-78) of the whole land of Palestine and (1882) of the peninsula of Sinai.

11. *Tell el-Hesi*. A new epoch was inaugurated when Prof. Flinders Petrie brought to bear on Palestinian exploration his experience in Egypt and, with Dr. Bliss, in 1891 excavated the mound of Tell el-Hesi, the Lachish of the Old Testament, revealing the existence of eleven successive cities. At 60 feet down from the summit of the mound were found the ruins of an Amorite city, 2000-1800 B. C.; at 54 feet down, the ruins of a second city with a cuneiform tablet and scarabs of the XVIII Egyptian dynasty, about 1450 B. C. A third city seems to have been destroyed and on top of its ruins was a wind-blown bed of ashes. Then a settlement was made on the ashes-bed, 1400-1200 B. C., the city of Joshua's time. The sixth city was a fenced city—the work, probably, of Rehoboam. Successive Hebrew cities of the times of Jehoshaphat, Amaziah, Uzziah, Ahaz, and Manasseh, have been traced by the ruins of the several walls.

12. *Tell Beit Mirsim*. Similar excavations have been made in other tells in the territory of Judea, the last being at Tell Beit Mirsim, the Kirjath-Sepher of *Joshua* and *Judges*, by Drs. Albright and Kyle, revealing a city established about 2000 B. C., burnt in 1600 B. C., but restored by the feudal lords occupying the country as a result of the racial migration which brought the Hyksos into Egypt. The second city was destroyed when the Israelites took it under Joshua (*Josh.* 15:15-17). The Israelites rebuilt it, but it was again destroyed by Shishak in

923 B. C. (*II Chr.* 12: 2-4), and finally destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's army (*II Kgs.* 25: 8-10).

13. *Gezer.* The most important excavation in Palestine was that of the city of Gezer (*I Kgs.* 9: 16), about twenty-eight miles northeast of Tell el-Hesi and nineteen west-northwest of Jerusalem, by the Palestine Exploration Fund under Dr. R. A. S. Macalister in 1902-05 and 1907-09. The history of the site from the stone age, through the Canaanite, the Egyptian, the Philistine, the Israelite, and the Syrian occupations was revealed, and a wealth of material establishing the character of the several civilizations recovered. Sir George Adam Smith reviewed the results of Macalister's work with the observation: "They are not more illustrative in anything than in the exhibition they afford of the primitive religious customs which Israel encountered upon their entry into Palestine, and which persisted in the form of idolatry and the moral abominations which usually accompanied this, up to the very end of the history of Israel upon the land."

14. *Other Excavations in Palestine.* The excavation of Samaria by Harvard University in 1909-10 disclosed the palaces of Omri and Ahab, and many potsherds—chiefly jughandles and labels—confirming what Isaiah said of the drinking habits of the capital of the Northern Kingdom.

The excavation of Ain-shems, probably the Beth-shemesh of *I Samuel* 6, by Dr. Duncan Mackenzie in 1911-12, confirmed the history disclosed by other Judean mounds, and furnished some striking Philistine remains which show a clear Greek archetype and confirm the theory of the Greek origin of the Philistines.

Of the excavations still in progress probably the most important are those of Beth-shan and Megiddo. The former, in the valley of Jezreel, near the Jordan, has been in process since 1921, under the University of Pennsylvania. Eight strata, representing as many cities, have been unearthed, while the depth reached is only one-third of the distance from the surface to bedrock. The date of the lowest level excavated is about 1450 B. C. The importance of the site, therefore, can be seen. Very valuable finds have been made. At least six Canaanite temples have been recovered, including one of Dagon, and another of Ashtoreth. It was in the latter that Saul's armor was hung by the Philistines after his defeat at mount Gilboa. His body was



fastened to the city wall, which is still black from the conflagration started in revenge by David (*I Sam.* 31:12). A statue of Ramses II has been found with the inscription: "I have collected the Semites that they might build my city of Ramses." This is the strongest external evidence for a late date for the Exodus.

The excavation of Megiddo by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago also is in progress. A large cave has been discovered in which implements and pottery of every period, beginning with the late stone age have been found. The name "Sheshonk" has been found on a stone fragment, and a tomb containing Egyptian scarabs from the nineteenth to the sixteenth century B. C. Most of the remains are Egyptian. A seal was unearthed, having a picture of a seated Pharaoh wearing a crown. Before him are the images of two gods, implying that peace reigned between Egypt and Asia. Thus the Egyptian sovereignty over the land during the Empire period is being established.

Gibeah of Saul, Jericho, Shechem, Shiloh, and other Bible sites, including Mizpeh (Tell en-Nasbeh), excavated by Dr. W. F. Bade of the Pacific School of Religion, have been recovered. Gibeah was shown to have been a fortified city, not older than 1200 B. C. Jericho was an important though small Amorite fortress which, according to Garstang, was destroyed about 1406 B. C. Shechem was an early Canaanite city showing Hebrew occupation after 1400 B. C. Shiloh was destroyed about 1050 B. C. and not rebuilt until Hellenistic times. Mizpeh was a store-city of the Amorites, as was shown by the huge grain bins uncovered there.

15. *Results.* On the whole, the excavations in Palestine have been disappointing. Much light has been thrown on Old Testament history. It is possible to expect too much from archæology. The Hebrews were not given to rock monuments. They committed their records to manuscripts, which have perished. We know the land and the environment of the people in their struggles for possession and continuance. About 480 of the 622 place names west of the Jordan given in the Old Testament have been identified with reasonable certainty. Ancient Jerusalem has been recovered. It has been shown from neolithic remains that the original settlement was on the southeast hill,



while on the western ridge nothing older than the Hebrew period has been found. That Jebus was a strongly fortified city when David took it, is evident from the walls of large hammer-shaped stones which Macalister and Duncan recovered in 1923. The city consisted of an upper and a lower city with a citadel. David captured the city by entering through the water-course (*II Sam.* 5: 8), probably the Jebusite tunnel from the lower city to the spring of Gihon. Even the breach made by David has been found.

The old civilization of Canaan, the dark background against which Israel made its way into its spiritual inheritance, has been restored. "We realize through this work [archæological research]," says Sir George Adam Smith, "what the purer religion of Israel had to contend with through the centuries. I may say that we realize to a large extent for the first time what it had to fight with, what it had to struggle against all the time. We have been told that monotheism was the natural offspring of desert scenery and desert life. But it was not in the wilderness that Israel's monotheism developed and grew strong. It was in the land of Palestine, with its many sanctuaries and its many forms of idolatry. When we contemplate all these systems, as shown by the explorations, we are surely the more amazed by the survival. Surely it is only the divine purpose, it is only the inspiration of the Most High which has been the cause."

### Questions

1. How were the languages of Egypt and of Assyria-Babylonia deciphered?

2. What does each of the following suggest to you?

- (1) Tell
- (2) Black Obelisk
- (3) Moabite Stone
- (4) Siloam Inscription

3. What is the significance of each of the following for the student of the Bible?

- (1) Assyrian Epics
- (2) Tell el-Amarna Tablets
- (3) Code of Hammurabi

4. What was revealed by the excavation of:

- (1) Ur of the Chaldees?

- (2) Tell el-Hesi?
- (3) Gezer?
- (4) Samaria?
- (5) Ain-shems?

5. What is the outstanding contribution made by archæology to Old Testament study?

6. What use can you find for the information found in this chapter, especially in connection with your work in the church?

### Topics for Further Study

*Archæology and the Early Stories of Genesis*

Consult G. A. Barton's *Archæology and the Bible*.

*Moses and Hammurabi*

See Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, Ext. Vol.

*What We Have Learned from Recovered Papyri*

Read J. Baikie's *Egyptian Papyri and Papyrus Hunting*.

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## CHAPTER XXII

# THE MAIN RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

### Bible Readings—

*Deuteronomy* 6: 4

*Isaiah* 6: 1-3

*Isaiah* 40: 18-26

*Psalms* 11: 7

*Psalms* 103: 8-18

*Lamentations* 3: 22, 23

*Genesis* 1: 26—3: 24

*Deuteronomy* 12: 5, 6

*Psalms* 51: 15-17

*Psalms* 6: 5; 49: 14, 15

}—Old Testament Teachings concerning God

}—Old Testament Teachings concerning Man

The main religious ideas of the Old Testament center in the teachings concerning God and concerning man.

1. *Teachings concerning God.* Throughout the Old Testament the existence of God is assumed. "It is not according to the spirit of the ancient world," says A. B. Davidson, "to deny the existence of God or to use arguments to prove it. The belief was one natural to the human mind and common to all men."<sup>(1)</sup> Just as little do the writers of the Old Testament think of arguing that God may be known. Both the possibility and the fact of revelation are assumed. The personality of God is also assumed; without it the Hebrews could not conceive of a religion of worship. "In the Old Testament conception of God nothing stands out from the first so strongly and unmistakably," says Schultz, "as the personality of the God of Israel."<sup>(2)</sup> The idea of the personality of God is manifested (1) in the anthropomorphisms, and (2) in the names of God used.

An anthropomorphism is the ascription of human attributes, feelings, conduct, or characteristics to God. This is so characteristic of the Old Testament that there are those who have said, "Its God is made in the image of man." But a personal God could be revealed to persons in no other than a personal way, and the highest revelation of God has come to us in the person of Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup> A. B. Davidson, *Theology of the Old Testament*.

<sup>2</sup> Schultz, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. II, p. 103.



The first name of deity is *El*, translated "God," which, alone and in compounds, occurs 2,570 times. It is a generic name for deity, not as a nature power or divinity, but as "the strong one," thought of as protector and chastiser. The second name is *Yahweh* (translated "Jehovah" or "Lord"). This is the name which God gave to Moses as an authentication of his mission (*Ex. 3: 15; 6: 3*). Jehovah is the God of history—"a moral power with a will and purpose." The name occurs 6,823 times in the Old Testament and always expresses, not what God is in his essential nature, but what he shows himself to be in and through his people. It is Jehovah who is the God of the Covenant. Jehovah possesses certain definite characteristics:

Jehovah is *one*. (**Read Deuteronomy 6: 4.**) He is one in that he cannot be divided. The God who appeared to Abraham is the God who appeared to Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, and Daniel. He could not be merged with Baal or any other god of the nations round about. The kingdom of Israel might be divided, but Jehovah could not be divided; there was not a northern Jehovah and a southern Jehovah. There was no sex distinction in the Hebrews' conception of their God; there is no word for "goddess" in the Hebrew language. "Israel is the only nation we know of," says Cornill, "that never had a mythology." Their God is one God.

Jehovah is *holy*. (**Read Isaiah 6: 1-3.**) Holiness is the unique quality of deity. It comes from a root which originally meant "distance" or "separation." It expresses not so much a quality of deity as the idea of deity itself. Deity was something other than man. This explains the effect of the divine presence upon the worshiper. "When God reveals himself in his holiness," says Ehlert, "the main feeling awakened is timidity." Jehovah was "a God of fearful holiness," says Kittel; "all that did not belong to him was an abomination to him. For sinful man to approach him was dangerous; to make an image of him was dangerous."<sup>3</sup> Thus he came to be thought of as a jealous God. He cannot give place to another and remain what he is.

Jehovah is *spiritual*. (**Read Isaiah 40: 18-25.**) The Old Testament does not say, as does the New Testament, that God is a spirit, but it constantly speaks of him as manifesting himself as

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<sup>3</sup> R. Kittel, *The Religion of the People of Israel*, p. 57.

a spirit. "The Egyptians are men and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit" (*Isa. 31:3*). Jehovah could intervene in ways man could not. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith Jehovah" (*Zech. 4:6*). Therefore, while Jehovah could be worshiped with altars and sacrifices, accommodating himself to man's senses, he could not permit images of himself.

Jehovah is *powerful*. (Read *Isaiah 40:26*.) "Is anything too hard for Jehovah?" (*Gen. 18:14*). He made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; and he made man (*Gen. 1, 2*).

Jehovah is *righteous*. (Read *Psalms 11:7*.) The root idea of righteousness is: conforming to standard. It was applied first to material things. Weights and measures were "righteous" when they were right. Paths were "righteous" when they were straight. A judge was righteous when he set right the case on trial before him. The standard here was the law, whether of God or the king or the priest. Now in this sense God cannot be called "righteous" for there is no higher authority which can govern his conduct. Jehovah is righteous because he acts consistently with his character. He never acts capriciously, as do the nature deities of the ancient mythologies. "God is righteous," says Ehlert, "in that in his government he does that which is suitable; viz., (1) what answers his aim; (2) what answers to his character."<sup>(4)</sup> Righteousness is a quality not of passive faultlessness but of right conduct both towards his people and towards the nations.

Jehovah is *merciful*. (Read *Psalms 103:8-18*.) The word which expresses this quality, "when used of God," says Delitzsch, "in general expresses the divine love condescending to His creatures, more especially to sinners in unmerited kindness."<sup>(5)</sup> The idea of this quality grows out of the Covenant. A covenant is a contract between persons in which the lines are laid down along which their future relations are to be governed. A covenant is always a limitation of the power of the stronger in the interest of the weaker. It binds the stronger party to his contract and the weaker to his obligations. In the case of deity it is called grace. Jehovah gave his Covenant that he would maintain his promise for all the future in dealing with his people. This is

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<sup>4</sup> Ehlert, *Theology of the Old Testament*.

<sup>5</sup> Delitzsch, *The Psalms*.



an absolute, not a relative quality, not dependent upon any human merit. It is the ground of the refrain in many Psalms, "for his lovingkindness endureth forever." (*Ps. 118:1-4*).

Jehovah is *faithful*. The root of the Hebrew word for "faithful" is in our word "Amen." The word is used especially of the divine promises. "Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (*Num. 23:19*).

2. *Teachings concerning Man.* The teachings of the Old Testament concerning man are more crude than those concerning God. As Knudson says, "Anthropology lagged far behind theology."<sup>(6)</sup>

In the Old Testament conception, the body and not the soul is the characteristic element of man. About eighty different parts of the human body are named in the Old Testament, but the Hebrews had no word for brain. The Hebrew center of consciousness did not lie in the head but in the heart. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he" (*Prov. 23:7*). Man is flesh, soul, and spirit. It is the spirit, which, breathed into the flesh, made man a living soul, and when the spirit is withdrawn from man, he expires, but his soul does not perish; the soul is the personality. It is the soul that lives on after death. But the heart is the center of spiritual life. The heart is the organ of conscience (*Job 27:6*), of discernment (*Jer. 5:24*), of faith (*Isa. 29:13*), of will (*Jer. 3:17*).

Man was created in the image of God. (**Read Genesis 1:26—3:24.**) This is the Old Testament expression to show man's original dignity. Man is the head of creation; he is the companion of God. But man fell into sin. The Old Testament writers have much to say about man's sin. The principal terms used for it may be grouped in four classes: (1) deviation from the right way; (2) the changed attitude; (3) rebellion; and (4) the nature of the sinful state. The generic word for sin means a missing of the goal. Sin is always a misfortune, a failure, a deviation from the way and the goal prescribed for man by the divine will. This word, as noun or verb, is used over five hundred times. The second word used is commonly translated "iniquity." It means, literally, a twist, crookedness, perversity; and it designates not so much an action as the character of the action. Then it means guilt. The third word is most

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<sup>6</sup> A. C. Knudson, *The Religious Teachings of the Old Testament*, p. 27.



important because it conveys a positive idea of sin: rebellion. "Sons have I brought up, and they have rebelled against me." (*Isa. 1:2*). "The word," says Davidson, "describes sin as a personal, voluntary act." This is sin as it is described in *Genesis 3*, for that chapter, however we may interpret it, pictures sin as an act of rebellion. The essence of the rebellious act lies in the will. Underlying sinful acts there is a sinful state. The nature of this sinful state is expressed in a variety of words: badness, violence, ruin, trouble, vanity, emptiness, folly, deceit.

Sin has its consequences. That sin involves punishment is an elemental Old Testament teaching, at least up to the time of the Babylonian exile. "Sin," says J. M. P. Smith, "is the occasion of divine punishment, and calamities in general are interpreted as chastisements for sin." The connection between sin and punishment seems almost automatic, and the innocent are not infrequently involved in disaster with the guilty; for example, Achan's offense brings defeat upon all Israel. More commonly it is the individual sinner who suffers. The transgression might be ceremonial, as in the case of Uzzah, or it might be moral, as in the case of Jezebel; it might be intentional, as in the case of David's sin with Bathsheba, or it might be unintentional, as in the case of Jonathan and the honey. In each of these cases, however, sin was the ground of punishment. There is one narrative which deals with the general problem: *Genesis 3*. Here the punishment of sin is not only the immediate suffering, the pains of childbirth and the sweat of labor; but the ultimate issue of it is death (*Gen. 3:19*). This supreme consequence of sin is pictured in the loss of the tree of life. Even if it is admitted that physical death is natural to man's body and that it is not a part of the curse as pronounced by Jehovah, it is plain from the story that it might have been avoided if it had not been for sin, and that it is the culmination of the woes sin brought into the world.

That sin brings punishment is the burden of the law of Moses, of *Deuteronomy*, and of the prophets. And the most poignant element of that punishment is separation from God and the loss of his favor. That is the essence of the Old Testament teaching concerning sin. And that is the starting point in our understanding of the Old Testament teaching concerning salvation. "Suffering and adversity," says Knudson, "spoke to primitive

man generally of an offended deity. . . . The only way they could be removed was by winning back the divine favor.”<sup>(7)</sup> How was that to be done? There were two stages of thought with respect to the recovery of the divine favor.

The first stage was that of *sacrifice*. (Read Deuteronomy 12: 5, 6.) Sacrifice was a primitive and instinctive prayer. It was one of the earliest of human customs, dating back to the first consciousness of estrangement between deity and man. The writer of *Genesis* carries it back to the sons of Adam. The tribal law reflected in *Exodus* 20-23 provided that, in the case of an ox known to be vicious, the owner shall make good any life destroyed by it, either by a forfeit of its life or by a ransom. Ransom is the payment accepted by one who has a right to more than he takes. From that comes the idea of atonement, which colors the whole ritual system of Israel.

The second stage was that of *repentance*. (Read Psalm 51: 15-17.) When the idea of sin had been lifted by the prophets out of the realm of ritual into that of morals, repentance superseded sacrifice as the means of restoring the divine favor. It was the teaching of the prophets from Amos on, that sacrifice in itself was of no avail. (*Amos* 5: 21-24; *Isa.* 1: 13, 14; *Jer.* 7: 22, 23.) Repentance as shown by a righteous life was the only hope of forgiveness. There was nothing so pleasing to Jehovah as “clean hands and a pure heart” (*Ps.* 24: 4). Thus might the sinner return to the divine favor.

The Old Testament is not greatly concerned with the life after death. Death takes place when the divine spirit which sustains man is withdrawn. What followed was looked upon with unconcealed dread. As the body was the elemental part of man, it was said that he was gathered to his fathers when his body was laid in the grave. His soul remained in Sheol, the dark, mysterious abode of the departed. Sheol is a place of gloom and silence, where “there is no work or reckoning or knowledge or wisdom” (*Eccl.* 9: 10). Above all, there is no remembrance of God. (Read Psalm 6: 5.) It was a place of doom as well as of gloom. “The penal sense of death covers all that the Old Testament says of man’s end,” says Salmond. “It is in its thoughts, where it is not in its words.” That Sheol should not finally triumph over them was the devout prayer of the

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<sup>7</sup> A. C. Knudson, *The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament*, p. 290.



psalmists. (**Read Psalm 49: 14, 15.**) Their faith lifted them out of despair. But *assurance* of eternal life came only with the New Testament and Jesus Christ.

### Questions

1. With what do the main teachings of the Old Testament deal?
2. What is the attitude of the Old Testament to the question of the existence of God? of the possibility of knowing God?
3. How is the personality of God expressed?
4. What are the principal names of God? the significance of each?
5. How is the character of God described?
6. What is meant by the unity of God? the holiness? the spirituality? the power? the righteousness? the mercy? the faithfulness?
7. What, according to the Old Testament conception, are the chief elements of man's being?
8. What is the center of man's spiritual life?
9. How was man's original dignity expressed?
10. What is the Old Testament conception of sin?
11. What, according to the Old Testament, are the consequences of sin?
12. What is the Old Testament idea of salvation? How is it accomplished?
13. What did the Old Testament writers say of the life after death?

### Topics for Further Study

#### *A Further Study of the Idea of God in the Old Testament*

Consult H. W. Robinson's *The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament* and A. C. Knudson's *The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament*.

#### *A Further Study of the Idea of Sin*

Consult Robinson and Knudson, as above.

#### *A Further Study of Forgiveness and Atonement*

Compare the sacrificial system of *Leviticus* with the implications of the Suffering Servant of *Isaiah 53*. Consult Robinson and Knudson, as above.



*The Unseen World*

Read W. O. E. Æsterley's *Immortality and the Unseen World: A Study in Old Testament Religion*.

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## CHAPTER XXIII

# THE RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

### Bible Readings—

*Exodus* 20: 1-17; 21: 15-25—Selections from the Book of the Covenant

*Leviticus* 19: 1-18—Selection from the Priestly Code

*Deuteronomy* 15: 1-18—Selection from the Deuteronomic Code

*I Kings* 8: 1-66—The Dedication of Solomon's Temple

The religion of Israel was organized around certain institutions, a knowledge of which is necessary to the understanding of many things in the Bible.

1. *The Covenant.* The relation into which Israel entered with Jehovah through Moses is called "the Covenant." According to *Exodus* 24: 4-8 a covenant union was established by sprinkling with blood first the altar and then the people, the Book of the Covenant being read by Moses between these two acts. In this impressive symbolism the truth was emphasized that the relationship of Israel to its God was that of a compact, a solemn contractual obligation, to do his will. This is the origin of the Law.

The Law is the general name given to the prescriptions of life and conduct which constituted the human side of the Covenant. Because these prescriptions are contained in the Pentateuch, the Pentateuch itself was called the Law (Torah) by the Hebrews. Here the laws appear in their historical setting in the rapidly moving current of the nation's life. By their own statement we owe the beginning of their codification to Moses. Later Hebrews attributed all their laws to Moses, calling the Pentateuch "the law of Moses" (*I Kgs.* 2: 3). Some of these laws are primitive and are based on very early practices; such are the laws of the Sabbath (*Gen.* 2: 2), of marriage (*Gen.* 2: 24), of the tithe (*Gen.* 14: 20), of homicide (*Gen.* 9: 5, 6), and the like. Some are borrowed, having been common or customary law in the parent Semitic stock from which the Hebrews sprang; for example, circumcision was extensively practiced in different parts of the world before it became a Hebrew rite. Many of the social laws in *Exodus* 20-23—at least twenty-five of them—are

parallels of laws in the code of Hammurabi, the sixth king of the first Babylonian dynasty, who ruled about 2000 B. C. The laws of the Pentateuch have come to be divided by scholars into several codes. These are the Book of the Covenant, the Priestly Code, and the Deuteronomic Code.

*The Book of the Covenant* is the name given to the laws found in *Exodus* 20-23. (Read selections from these chapters.) It includes the Decalogue, or the Ten Words, which is the heart of the Covenant. Kautsch has well said that our use of the Decalogue in the catechism has blinded us to their original character. We have made them an ethical standard; they originally were a bill of rights. We have construed the commandments as prohibitions; however, the negative "not" is not the negative of the imperative but simply of futurity. It is a statement of confidence—gentleman's agreement, as it were. God had delivered the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage. They were his people, and his people would adopt his way of life.

The Decalogue is followed by a series of "judgments" which have to do with the protection of persons and property, family and social life. It is in these laws that the parallels with the code of Hammurabi are found. They include also the enactment of primitive religious ordinances, such as the offering of the firstfruits, annual pilgrimages, and the erection of lay altars. We note the brief, pithy form of these words and judgments—a form to be held in memory as the guide of life in a primitive community.

The *Priestly Code* is found in *Exodus* 25 to *Leviticus* 27, and *Numbers* 1-10. (Read selections from these chapters.) Following the Book of the Covenant we have a large body of statutes, or directions, which constitute the handbook of priestly procedure. The Israelite was not only to be governed in his community life by the judgments given by the great lawgiver, but he was also to be trained in the congregation as a worshiper of Jehovah. Israel was to be Jehovah's witness among the nations. To this end the ceremonial law was given, which at once reflected the holy character of God and emphasized "the sinfulness of sin." This is called the Priestly Code because it is contained in what has been called the handbook of priests—namely, *Exodus* 25—*Leviticus* and some portions of *Numbers*. In it are to be found the specifications of the tabernacle and its



furniture, directions concerning the priesthood, descriptions of the various kinds of sacrifice, statutes concerning the clean and the unclean, and that wonderful ritual of personal and community purity called the Holiness Code (*Lev. 17-26*). Here we have laws concerning the slaughter of animals for food, chastity and marriage, idolatry and dishonesty, the conduct of priests and their offerings. Here we find, too, the table of the great festivals (*Lev. 23*) and the full significance of the sabbatic year (*Lev. 25*). The Holiness Code extends religion into the realm of the moral.

The Deuteronomic Code is found in *Deuteronomy*, mainly in chapters 12-26. (Read selections from these chapters.) These laws are almost the same as those already given and recorded in the earlier books of the Pentateuch, but there is much summarizing here and more attention is given to civil life and less to religious ceremonies; in short, it is the enunciation of the principles on which the new nation in Canaan is to be founded. We might call these laws the constitution of the nation of Israel. At once we are impressed with their style. They are hortatory—just such laws as a patriot-father would lay upon the hearts of his people as the guide of their national life. Worship is centralized; heathen rites are abjured; the people are exhorted to scrupulous abstinence from what is unclean; the tithe is made a poor-fund; the duties of judges and kings are specified; the social relations of priests and prophets are defined; cities of refuge are provided and property is protected; limitations are placed on the conduct of war; social rights and obligations generally are specified; and the national recognition of Jehovah as the God of Israel is prescribed (*Deut. 26*). *Deuteronomy* reveals Jehovah as the God of history.

A study of Old Testament laws reveals certain basic principles which are abiding: (1) Religion is the basis of conduct. When our Lord was asked what was the first commandment—that is, the first principle of a life which might hope for approval—he replied, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God” (*Mt. 22:37*). Love of an ethical God will beget an ethical life, and there is nothing else that will guarantee it. (2) Such a religion puts a premium on righteousness. It puts its stamp on truth; it condemns a lie in word and deed (*Ex. 20:16; Deut. 25:13-15; Lev. 19:11*); it inculcates honesty (*Ex. 20:15; 23:8*). (3) Such a religion also

inspires kindness. The Hebrew commonwealth was a brotherhood (*Lev. 19: 18; Deut. 23: 19*). Such provisions as were made for its members are not found in the civic laws of the surrounding nations.

2. *The Cultus.* The cultus means the external practice of worship. Among the Israelites it found expression in four main elements of worship: a place of worship, a priesthood, a variety of sacrifices, and an observance of certain sacred times and seasons. The cultus centered in *a place of worship*.

The first place of worship was the altar. The origin of the altar is buried in antiquity. From its Hebrew name it signifies the place of sacrifice. In the Priestly Code the altar had a two-fold use: (1) the blood of the sacrificed animal was poured upon it, and (2) the sacrifice in whole or in part was consumed upon it. The former was the older. For this purpose an unhewn stone or heap of stones was used. The deity was thought of as dwelling in or behind the stone. The altar was, therefore, the threshold to his presence. Later, when a sanctuary was created, the altar was placed at the door. In the days of the patriarchs altars were set up where theophanies—visions of God's presence—had occurred (*Gen. 12: 7; 26: 25; 28: 18; 33: 20; 35: 7*).

The altar was the place of worship for an individual or at most a tribe; but, when the tribes of Israel became organized, the altar expanded into a tent of testimony (*Num. 9: 15*), popularly called "the tabernacle." Its primary purpose was to house the Ark of the Covenant. The tabernacle consisted of three main parts, the outer court, the holy place, and the holy of holies, together with the necessary implements of worship (*Ex. 25-38*).

After Israel had become established in the land, the Temple was built in the capital of the nation, and the worship of the people centered in it. The first Temple was built by Solomon on mount Moriah about 960 B. C. (**Read I Kings 8: 1-66.**) This was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 B. C., but was rebuilt under Zerubbabel and finished in 516 B. C. In the course of the centuries it became dilapidated. Then, in 20 B. C., Herod the Great undertook to restore it with great magnificence. It was finally completed A. D. 65, only about five years before its final destruction. The Temple was built, on the site now occupied by the Dome of the Rock, the so-called Mosque of Omar, of stone quarried beneath the hill on which it stood, on the ground



plan of the tabernacle. The holy of holies contained the ark and the golden cherubim, and was lighted only by the cloud of the divine presence. It was separated from the holy place by a rich curtain which only the high priest might pass. In the holy place were the golden altar of incense, the table of shewbread, and ten golden candlesticks. In the surrounding enclosure, the court of priests, were the altar of burnt offerings and a large laver called the "molten sea." The approach to the holy place consisted of a porch, with two bronze pillars at the entrance, Jachin and Boaz. Within, the Temple was covered with pure gold.

Out of the experience of the exiles in Babylon was born the synagogue. It was the creation of the spirit of prayer which the Exile developed. It was a place of meeting, as the name suggests. Of all the institutions of the Hebrew religion it corresponds most nearly to the Christian church. "Wherever ten heads of Jewish families could be found, a synagogue could be established." There were 460 synagogues in Jerusalem. They multiplied similarly in all the cities of the Roman Empire where there were Jews, and they housed the first preaching of the Gospel.

A second fundamental institution of the religion of Israel, as of all religions, was the *priesthood*. The men attached to a shrine were called "Levites." The priest is primarily the guardian of the shrine, the sacrificer at its altar, and the interpreter of its oracle. In Israel these ministers constituted a tribe. That means that they were not a caste, as among many ancient peoples. The Levites had their place among their brethren. It was their loyalty to Jehovah that gave them their office (*Ex.* 32:26). The chief of that tribe was the first chief priest, an office which became hereditary. In the Temple, as ideally in the tabernacle, the Aaronic priesthood offered the sacrifices and performed the ritual of atonement. The priesthood necessarily became an office, with divided duties and limitations of personal freedom.

The third characteristic element of Hebrew worship is *sacrifice*—the means by which Israel was to realize its peculiar relation to Jehovah. The sacrifices prescribed by the Mosaic ritual were of two kinds: (1) those which assumed that the covenant relation was unbroken, and (2) those which assumed



that the relation had been broken. Of the former class are the burnt offering and the peace offering; of the latter, the sin offering and the trespass offering.

The burnt offering was the generic offering of the Levitical system. It consisted of the daily sacrifice, morning and evening, of a yearling of the flock. It was used on all special occasions, like the three great feasts and any great national occasion. It was called "the whole burnt offering" because all the flesh was consumed by fire on the altar. It expressed worship in the widest sense, praise for past mercies and the consecration of the worshiper to God (*Lev. 1:2-9*). The offering might be an animal or a bird, according to the ability of the offerer. It corresponds to the general prayer in the church service.

The peace offering, as the name indicates, was either a thank offering for the benefits received or an imprecatory offering for those desired. The victim could be any animal used for sacrifice. The offering was divided into three parts: the fat was burned on the altar; the breast and right shoulder were eaten by the priests; the remainder was eaten by the worshiper and his friends. It was therefore a communion, and corresponds to the sacrament of the altar in the church service.

The sin offering, together with the trespass offering, presupposes an interruption of the covenant relation. These offerings were peculiar to the Levitical system. We read of "burnt offerings" and "sacrifices" or "peace offerings" before Moses, but the first mention of the sin offering is in *Exodus 29:10-14*. Burnt offerings and sacrifices were offered at any altar; the sin offering, only at the central place of worship. It was always a congregational offering, a sacrifice of atonement within the Covenant for unwitting offenses. No atonement was prescribed for deliberate sin (*Num. 15:30*). The law of the sin offering is given in *Leviticus 4*, where there is a gradation of offerings according to the rank of the offerer. Except when the atonement was for the whole congregation or for the priest himself, the latter received a portion of the offering. Otherwise, all the fat was burned on the altar and the carcass was carried outside the camp. The essential thing was to offer the blood to Jehovah (*Lev. 4:3-7*). On the Day of Atonement the priest must offer a bullock as a sin offering for himself and two kids of the goats as a sin offering for the people. One of these became "the scape-

goat" and was led into the wilderness; the other was to be offered like the bullock. This offering corresponds to the confession in the church service.

The trespass offering (R. V., "guilt offering") was an individual penalty-offering. Trespass offerings were never offered for the whole congregation. Only a ram was prescribed to be offered—the same offering for all ranks. The blood was only to be sprinkled on the altar of burnt offering—not carried into the holy, or most holy, place. A material penalty was also prescribed (*Lev. 5: 1-10*).

The meal offering was a vegetable offering, added to the peace offering (*Lev. 7:12, 13*). In addition to these prescribed sacrifices there were offerings of firstfruits, first-born, tithes, etc.

A fourth element in the Hebrew cultus was the observance of *sacred times and feasts*. It had a very full religious calendar. The times and seasons to be observed were determined by nature and by experience. There was the weekly Sabbath, the generic holy day (*Gen. 2: 1-3; Ex. 20: 8-11*). There was the monthly new moon (*Num. 10: 10*), observed as a Sabbath. There was the sabbatical year (*Lev. 25: 2-7*), observed as a year of rest for the soil. There was the year of jubilee (*Lev. 25: 9, 10*), or sabbath of sabbatical years, when slaves were set free, debts forgiven, and forfeited inheritance recovered. And there were the seven annual solemnities:

- (1) The Feast of the Passover (*Ex. 12: 1-28*), in the spring, on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, commemorating the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, observed with the eating of unleavened bread and a slain lamb;
- (2) The Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost (*Lev. 23: 15-21*), in the early summer, on the fiftieth day after the Passover, commemorating the giving of the Law, observed with the laying of the firstfruits on the altar;
- (3) The Feast of Tabernacles (*Lev. 23: 34-44*), in the fall, commemorating the outdoor life of the wilderness, observed by living in huts, or booths;
- (4) The Day of Atonement (*Lev. 16: 23, 26-32; Num. 29: 7-11*), in the fall, five days before the Feast of Tabernacles, when the high priest entered into the holy of holies;



- (5) The Feast of Trumpets (*Lev. 23:24*), the first day of the seventh month, "New Year Day," observed with the blowing of trumpets;
- (6) The Feast of Dedication (*Jn. 10:22*), commemorating the re-dedication of the Temple under Judas Maccabeus, 166 B. C., after its defilement by the Syrians;
- (7) The Feast of Purim (*Esth. 9:17-32*), commemorating Queen Esther's deliverance of the Jewish people.

### Questions

1. What is the chief religious institution in the Old Testament?
2. What was the human side of the Covenant?
3. How are the laws of the Pentateuch classified by scholars?
4. What is the nature of the Book of the Covenant? of the Priestly Code? of the Deuteronomic Code?
5. What were the chief elements of the cultus of Israel?
6. What was the significance of the altar?
7. Give the main parts of the tabernacle.
8. How did the Temple differ from the tabernacle?
9. What was the synagogue? When did it originate?
10. What was the origin of the priesthood?
11. Describe the main sacrifices in Israel's order of worship.
12. What were the chief sacred days?
13. What were the seven annual feasts?

### Topics for Further Study

#### *The Permanent Value of the Ten Commandments*

Read H. J. Flower's *The Permanent Value of the Ten Commandments*.

#### *A Comparison of the Sabbath and the Lord's Day*

Consult Bible dictionaries and books on the Ten Commandments, particularly George Dana Boardman.

#### *The Relation of the Church to the Synagogue*

What contribution has Jewish worship made to Christian worship? Read Æsterley and Box's *The Religion and the Worship of the Synagogue*, and Kohler's *The Origin of the Synagogue and the Church*.



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## CHAPTER XXIV

### FULFILLMENT

#### Bible Readings—

*Matthew 5: 17*—Jesus, the Fulfillment of Prophecy

*Hebrews 9: 11-14; 10: 1-14*—Jesus, the Fulfillment of Sacrifice

*John 18: 33-37*—Jesus, the Fulfillment of Messianic Kingship

*Matthew 26: 20-64*—Jesus, the Son of Man

*John 1: 43-51*—Jesus, the Fulfiller of the Old Testament

We come to the end of the Old Testament with the feeling that we have been studying a truly great book of religion whose stirring scenes and songs, whose symbolism and prophetic words have moved us in our inner life, but that the book in itself is *incomplete*. There are longings which are unsatisfied, prophecies which are unfulfilled, hopes which are deferred. Though Israel inherits Canaan, it never reaches its spiritual inheritance. The Old Testament writers were always looking forward. In the words of Wescott, "The Old Testament does not simply *contain* prophecies—it is one vast prophecy, in the record of national fortunes, in the ordinances of a national law, in the expression of a national hope. Israel in its history, in its ritual, in its ideal, is a unique enigma among the peoples of the world."<sup>(1)</sup> What makes the enigma is not that there has been no fulfillment of these prophecies or satisfaction of these hopes, but that the Jewish people rejected that fulfillment when it came. The effort to satisfy the hopes deferred by that rejection in the modern movement of Zionism will fail as all similar artificial efforts have failed. As one of the ablest of Jewish scholars has said, "The chief difficulty with Zionism is the religious question. The proposed state would have to be orthodox or secular. If it were orthodox it would have to revive the whole Levitical polity, and . . . it would so offend the modern political spirit that it would soon extinguish itself from the outside. If it were secular it would not be a Jewish state. The great bulk of supporters would refuse to live in it. . . . With the passing of anti-Semitism Jewish nationalism will disappear. If the Jewish people disappear with it, it will be only because either their religious

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop Wescott, *Hebrews*, 1892, p. 480.

mission in the world has been accomplished, or they have proved themselves unworthy of it.”<sup>(2)</sup>

Those are as tragic words as a Jew has ever written. The religious mission of the Jews has been fulfilled. The great departments of God's government and dealings with Israel were the prophethood, the priesthood, and the kingship, or, interpretation, fellowship, and the rule of life. No man was ever found in Israel who fulfilled them; they were fulfilled in Jesus.

1. *Prophecy Culminated in Jesus.* “Prophecy,” says Kirkpatrick, “was no premature unrolling of the future. . . . But from first to last it pointed forward to a great divine purpose slowly being evolved in the course of the ages, to ‘some far off divine event,’ towards which the history of Israel and the history of the world were moving.”<sup>(3)</sup> There were times when that purpose seemed about to be fulfilled; there were times when it tarried. But no impartial reader comes to the end of the Old Testament with the feeling that the goal of prophecy has been reached. On the other hand, no sooner does he open the New Testament than the light of fulfillment breaks upon him in satisfying fullness. The hopes of Israel centered in a *personal Messiah*. The Hebrew was practical. He did not think of the mere triumph of ideas. “In the Hebrew people the idea of God was the regulative principle of life, the national law, and the social morality.”<sup>(4)</sup> Hence, we have the pictures of a personal Messiah. In no other way could God's reign on earth be conceived as being inaugurated. As a child he was to be the gift of God, “Immanuel—God is with us” (*Isa. 7:14*); of the house of David (*Isa. 11:1*); one upon whom would rest the Spirit of Jehovah (*Isa. 11:2-5*); a prince out of Bethlehem (*Mic. 5:2*); one to whom the nations would come to learn righteousness (*Isa. 2:2-4*). The Servant Songs (*Isa. 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11; 52:13—53:12*) tell how he would overcome the hindrances to his ministry, be a light to the nations, give his back to the smiter, and seal his testimony with his death. It is a simple matter of history that these words of Isaiah have become the classic description of the mission of Jesus. The New Testament is full of them. Jesus lived out the ancient and eternal truths which it was given the prophets to speak. (**Read Matthew 5:17.**)

<sup>2</sup> L. Wolf, *Jewish Encyclopedia*, “Zionism.”

<sup>3</sup> A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Doctrine of the Prophets*, p. 516.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



2. *The Priesthood Culminated in Jesus.* Again it is a simple matter of history that blood sacrifices ceased with the establishment of the Christian Church. They could not go on when men grasped the significance of the mission of Jesus. "It is impossible that the blood of animal victims should cleanse a human conscience from guilt, for in such sacrifice there is no conscious and voluntary, and therefore no moral element. Nor is there any real community between offerer and victim. We thus see why the writer of *Hebrews* lays such stress on the incarnation and real human experience of Christ. He becomes Man not simply that he may sympathize with us, but that he may offer himself for us. Vicarious sacrifice is a principle profoundly true, but he who sacrifices himself for others must first be one with them."<sup>(5)</sup> The writer of the Song of the Suffering Servant (*Isa.* 52:13—53:12) sensed this truth about sacrifice. Hence this wonderful picture, which has been so baffling to Jewish interpreters: "He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hid their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every man to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Like the Ethiopian eunuch, we ask, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" And the answer may be found in these words of Sir George Adam Smith: "About five hundred and fifty years after this prophecy was written, a Man came forward among the sons of men—among this very nation from whom the prophecy had arisen; and in every essential of consciousness and of experience he was the counterpart, embodiment, and fulfillment of this Suffering Servant and his service. Jesus Christ answers the questions which the prophecy raises and leaves unanswered."<sup>(6)</sup> Jesus' sacrifice of himself fulfilled and gave meaning to what was but type and shadow and made it thenceforth unnecessary. (Read *Hebrews* 9: 11-14; 10: 1-14.)

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<sup>5</sup> Peake, *The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament*, 1904.

<sup>6</sup> G. A. Smith, *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. II, p. 382.

3. *The Kingship Culminated in Jesus.* The ruling idea of the Old Testament is the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. Israel was to be Jehovah's people, and he was to be their King. To bring Israel to realize this high calling was the task of Moses and subsequent prophets. It was too much to expect of a people described as the offspring of an Amorite and a Hittite (*Ezek.* 16:3). "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations," they said to Samuel (*I Sam.* 8:5); and such a king they got. Very soon—especially in the days of Solomon—it became evident to pious souls that it was not a military or political king who was to establish the kingdom of their God, but Jehovah's own anointed One. To him the obedience of the people is to be. To him are given the nations for his inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession (*Ps.* 2). Before him shall all kings fall down; all nations shall serve him (*Ps.* 72). David and his house will continue to rule only until the Messiah King comes. "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse. . . . And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him. . . . And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes . . . , but with righteousness shall he judge the poor . . . , and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth. . . . And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins" (*Isa.* 11:1-5). According to Jeremiah, the Messiah was to bear the name "Jehovah our righteousness," by which the prophet meant not only that the Messiah was to introduce the ideal righteousness of the divine rule, but that he was to be the means by which the individual members of the new kingdom would be made righteous.

Where in the Old Testament is there even an approach to a fulfillment of these prophecies? For a moment, in the high hopes of the restoration after the Babylonian captivity, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah seem to have hailed Zerubbabel as the Messiah of the earlier prophets, but the illusion soon passed. And then Jesus came and accepted the homage of the rejoicing bands of pilgrims who went before him in his so-called triumphal entry into Jerusalem, proclaiming, "Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David." He knew that he was the King that was to come, but when he asked the people how the Messiah could at once be the son and lord of David, he divorced his kingdom from their political expectations and



announced his rule in the spiritual terms of the ancient prophets. (Read John 18: 33-37.)

There is yet another stage in the development of the Messianic teaching of the Old Testament which culminated in Jesus. This is represented by the *Son of Man* of the book of *Daniel* (*Dan.* 7: 13, 14). Just as the figure of the Suffering Servant in *Isaiah* is seen to be that of the Messianic Redeemer through whom the world's redemption is to be wrought, so in *Daniel* the figure of the Son of Man stands for the judicial office and the world rule of the heavenly Messiah. Who was the Son of Man? The attempt to find the interpretation in the Old Testament has failed. To say that it was Israel, and that "the clouds of heaven" with which the Son of Man was to come refer to the heavenly origin of Israel, has proved unsatisfactory. The title remained a mystery until Jesus appropriated it to himself. "We touch here the height and depth of his originality," says Muirhead. He was the Son of Man who came eating and drinking—one with men—and he was the Son of Man who would sit on the throne of his glory and determine men's destinies, as a standard determines the fate of the true and the false in any realm. "Nothing," says Dr. Denney, "marks off his consciousness of himself more distinctly from every form of prophetic consciousness than this, that, whereas the prophets looked forward to the coming of another, what Jesus saw as the final and glorious consummation of God's purposes was his own coming again."<sup>(7)</sup> "Then we come again to the conclusion," says Dr. W. J. Moulton, "that the witness of Israel was to the coming of a Person. Jesus claimed to be that Person, and by his use of the 'Son of Man' indefinitely deepened the meaning of all earlier hopes."<sup>(8)</sup> (Read Matthew 26: 20-64.)

Thus Jesus takes each of the great forms under which the hopes for the future had been expressed, forms so various that apart from him no harmony was imaginable, and with perfect naturalness applies them all to himself. In so doing he practically claims that the past history of his people had worked toward one end. The Old Testament has its fulfillment in him. Hence it is that Christian faith exclaims when it finds him: "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth." (Read John 1: 43-51.)

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<sup>7</sup> J. Denney, *Jesus and the Gospel*.

<sup>8</sup> W. J. Moulton, *The Witness of Israel*, p. 270.



### Questions

1. Why is the Old Testament in itself not a satisfying book?
2. What is the chief characteristic of its contents?
3. What goal do Zionists find in the Old Testament?
4. What is the weakness of the Zionistic theory?
5. Where is the fulfillment of the Old Testament to be found?
6. How does Jesus fulfill the three great offices of Israel's hoped-for Messiah?
7. What further description of the Messiah did Jesus take to himself?
8. Does the fact that the Old Testament is an incomplete book have any bearing on the way in which lessons from the Old Testament should be taught? State your reasons for your answer.

### Topics for Further Study

*The Servant Songs* (Isa. 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12)  
Consult G. A. Smith's *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. II.

#### *The Son of Man*

With the help of a concordance, study the passages in the Old and New Testaments which speak of the "Son of man." See also J. Stalker's *The Christology of Jesus* and the bibliography there given.

#### *Zionism*

Look up "Zionism" in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*. See also M. Jastrow's *Zionism and the Future of Palestine*.

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